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CORPUS CHRISTI PAGEANTS IN ENGLAND

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IN

ENGLAND

By

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PREFACE

The pleasantest part of an otherwise very pleasant task is an opportunity to express my gratitude to Mr. Samuel Moore of Harvard University, to Mr. T. A. Knott of the University of Chicago, and to Professor John M. Manly for their invaluable assistance in the preparation of this book. Much of the material contained in chapter five was suggested to me, either wholly or in part, by Mr. Moore, who was so generous as to lend me all his notes and a most valuable paper that he had written on the conventions of the cyclic drama. To Mr. Knott I am greatly indebted for a careful perusal of the entire book and for much advice and friendly criticism. And to Professor Manly I am grateful for the first suggestion of the work, for full discussions of the book in its various stages, and for a most generous loan of all his notes on the early drama. Without the help of Mr. Moore, Mr. Knott, and Professor Manly this volume would not have been possible, and I avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to them for their assistance and friendly counsel.

M. L. S.

Spartanburg, S. C.,
June, 1911.

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CORPUS CHRISTI PAGEANTS IN ENGLAND

I

INTRODUCTORY

The Early Drama. One of the most fruitful fields of inquiry in early English literature in recent years has been that concerning the origin and development of the religious drama. Scholars have unearthed much about the language of the plays, about their sources, about dramatic conditions prior to the first regular theatres, and about the manners and the customs of the people in those early times. Interesting information of all sorts has been brought to light during the course of this continued investigation, information that has been of value, not only to the special student of the medieval English stage, but to every Shakspere lover and every student of the later drama, in that it reveals the plays and the pageants in which his forefathers before the days of the first regular theatres used to find amusement and religious instruction. From these early plays we have learned how the modern stage has grown out of the old Catholic church service and how

we have developed our modern mixtures of tragedy in the midst of comedy, of comedy mingled with tragedy, and that union of pathos and humor which has been so prominent in our drama since the days of Shakspere.

Purpose. Some parts of the subject, however, have not been investigated with as much thoroughness and completeness as others. One field not yet adequately understood is that which includes the decorations, the management, and the general stage business of the Corpus Christi pageants. Everybody has known for a long time, of course, that the Corpus Christi cars often consisted of three important parts, an upper stage, a lower stage, and another indefinite part somewhere which was used to represent hell, but we have not known definitely always how these stages were relatively situated nor what their exact relation to each other was. Everybody has known, too, that the stages were often gorgeously decorated and were well furnished with properties and mechanical devices; but the precise use of these stages, the multiple decorations, the easy shift of scenes, and the exact methods of representation have never been definitely disclosed. And while much has been known about dramatic methods at Chester, somewhat more, probably, about those at York, and still more perhaps about those at Coventry, still the general relation to each other of all the

Corpus Christi stages in the different towns of England has not yet been determined. It is the purpose of this study to summarize the work that has already been done on this subject and to define more clearly if possible the problems which have been touched upon but which have not yet been worked out thoroughly. This volume, then, will concern itself with the customs governing the production of the pageants, with the relations of the different parts of the stage to each other, with the principles of decoration and the use of properties, and with the general subject of the actors and their costumes.

Hindrances. In beginning a study of the Corpus Christi pageants in England, however, it is first and most of all regrettable that no historical account of their development is possible, because of the loss of so many of the original records of this celebrated English festival. Except for the records contained in Thomas Sharp's *Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries Anciently performed at Coventry, by the Trading Companies of that City* (1825) and those in his edition for the Abbotsford Club of *The Presentation in the Temple, A Pageant, as originally represented by the Corporation of Weavers in Coventry* (1836), the majority of our most important original documents, and even what copies may have existed, seem to have been lost. Sharp's plan in both of these volumes was to publish any

interesting details that might be illustrative of "the vehicle, characters, and dresses of the actors" in the "pageants or dramatic mysteries", a method which makes his books still a mine of valuable information to students of the religious drama. But further than that, for plays other than those at Coventry, investigators in recent years have been compelled to rely for all their information on scattered fragments of pieced-together information gathered from imperfect and incomplete accounts of the city leet books, of the English trading guilds, and from other similar sources. And even in the case of the Coventry plays students of to-day are hampered by the fact that almost all of Sharp's sources were lost in the fire which destroyed the Free Reference Library at Birmingham in 1879, and that the Coventry play-book itself with all the cycle of plays has not yet been discovered, though two of its scenes, the *Nativity and Slaughter of the Innocents* and the *Presentation in the Temple,* have survived separately.

Sources of Information. On the other hand, although the loss of so many records has rendered impossible any chronological study of the plays, one should add that the work of the student has been immensely lightened by the many excellent reprints and studies of earlier investigators in this field, such as Davies, Morris, Furnivall, Manly, Smith, Leach, Chambers, Bates, Craig, and others. Several of these scholars, it is true, did not have

the Corpus Christi pageants particularly in view in their work, but their contributions are nevertheless most valuable. Davies's *Extracts from the Municipal Records of the City of York* (1843), for example, while purposing particularly "to throw light upon the condition of the city [of York], and the manners, customs, language, and domestic habits and circumstances of its inhabitants", furnishes us with much valuable material on the Corpus Christi festival in that city. In the same way Morris's interest in his *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns* was general rather than specific, and he unfortunately devoted only ten pages to the "Whitson Plaies", yet his selections from the original MSS are remarkably concise and definite and are peculiarly well adapted to illustrating the staging of the pageants. In contrast to these, Dr. Furnivall was always especially interested in the drama and has put us under many obligations to him for his reprint of the Rogers "Breauarye" of Chester and for many other valuable helps in the study of Corpus Christi stage presentation. Likewise, Miss L. T. Smith in the introduction to her edition of the *York Mystery Plays,* and elsewhere, has given many helpful suggestions, and by publishing the text of the York plays has made that cycle accessible for the first time. More recently Mr. A. F. Leach has made public many of the records of Beverley in his *Beverley Town Documents* and has added much

other new and useful information in his contribution to the *Furnivall Miscellany*. Most of all, possibly, students of the early drama are indebted to Mr. E. K. Chambers for the exhaustive, scholarly, and authoritative report of his investigations in the two volumes of his *Mediaeval Stage*. The chapters on "Guild Plays and Parish Plays" and "Moralities, Puppet-plays, Pageants" in the second volume, and the various appendices, are invaluable to students of the Corpus Christi drama. Miss Bates also has given an interesting account of the pageants in her little volume on the *English Religious Drama*, and Dr. Craig in his *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays* has made the work of Sharp, Jeaffreson, and others more accessible than before, besides furnishing in his introduction much new material about the plays. And so there are others whom lack of space forbids mentioning here, but to whom thanks are due for their excellent work in making the medieval material and records available and in otherwise removing hindrances from the path of later students.

Confusion of Terms. In spite of the investigations of these scholars, however, there remains one serious difficulty that every student must encounter in any consistent study of the medieval stage, the almost bewildering confusion in the use of terms, a confusion so great that it would seem as if writers of that time were accustomed to class as a "play" anything from a morris dance to a

morality. Thus when one reads in the records of the corporation of Plymouth that the craft of tailors "shall make or cause to be made at the cost and charge of the said crafte a pagent yerely unto Corpus Christi Ilde for the welthe and profitt of the said Ilde on Corpus Christi day; and the same they shall kepe and maynteyn for euer at their coste and charge, for the which pagent the said bretherdyn may be prayed for euer in the said Ilde", it is by no means clear from such a leet alone whether a play or a pageant-car in the Corpus Christi procession was required of the tailors; for the terms "pageant" and "play" at that time were used interchangeably. Indeed we find the word "pageant" in the writings of this time meaning a playing place, a stage, a character, an episode, a scene, or even a mechanical device. Wiclif in his *Ave Maria* uses it in the sense of "character" when he says "he that kan best pleie a pagyn of the deuyl, syngynge songis of lecherie, of batailis and of lesyngis . . . is holden most merie mon". And Chambers[1] quotes a passage from a writer of the early sixteenth century which shows the absolute confusion of the word: "Alexander played a payante more worthy to be wondred vpon for his rasshe aduenture than for his manhede. . . . There were v coursis in the feest and as many paiantis in the pley. I wyll haue made v stagȝ or bouthis in this playe (*scenas*). I wolde haue a

[1] *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 137 *n.*

place in the middyl of the pley (*orchestra*) that I myght se euery paiaunt. Of all the crafty and subtyle paiantis and pecis of warke made by mannys wyt, to go or moue by them selfe, the clocke is one of the beste". Nor does the confusion stop with the word "pageant". We find "ministrallis" meaning tumblers and musicians, *histriones* meaning jugglers, bear-wards, or musicians, as well as actors, and the same confusion in the terms *ludus, ludentes,* plays, players, *etc.* The result is that the student of this period cannot trust the nomenclature of the early scribes, nor of many later writers, such as Warton, Collier, or even Ward, but must slowly and laboriously collect his own data, make his own classifications, and formulate his own definitions as his conception of medieval life becomes clearer.

"Corpus Christi Plays." It was for this reason, on account of the unscientific tendency of the medievalists to use terms inexactly and inaccurately, that the name, Corpus Christi, came to be so all-inclusive as it did. For example, at Lincoln the annual pageants were given on St. Anne's day, July 26, yet they are called Corpus Christi plays; and at Chester and Norwich they were produced at Whitsuntide as well as during Corpus Christi week, and yet were always known as Corpus Christi.

This application of the term "Corpus Christi plays" to plays produced on other occasions seems to have been due to the fact that the pageants were

originally given during Corpus Christi week. Because of the conflict between the holiday and the spiritual elements in the festival, however, the plays had to be transferred from Corpus Christi week to other dates, where, in spite of the change of time for representation, they still retained their original name. That this is the most probable explanation may be inferred from the contest which went on at York in 1426 when Friar William Melton "recommended the Corpus Xpi play to the people, affirming that it was good in itself and highly praiseworthy; yet he said that the citizens and others, strangers visiting the city at the festival not for the play alone, joined in revellings, drunkenness, clamour, singing, and other improprieties, little regarding the divine offices of the day; and it was to be lamented that they consequently lost the benefit of the indulgences graciously conceded by Pope Urban IV. to those who duly attended the religious services appointed by the canons: and therefore to the said Friar William it seemed profitable, and to this he persuaded the people of the city, that the play should be on one day and the procession on another, so that the people might attend divine service at the churches and receive the benefit of the promised indulgences." [2] And as a result of the Friar's exhortations the plays were presented on Wednesday, the vigil of the feast, while the procession was kept

[2] Davies, *York Records*, p. 243.

for the festival itself. It was a similar move, too, apparently, which was made later at Chester sometime between 1471 and 1520, when the pageants were changed from Corpus Christi to Whitsun week and yet continued to be known by their old name. Hence it seems fair to say that there were no material differences among these religious processional plays at any of the midsummer festivals; and for this reason references for methods of presentation will be made in this volume alike to biblical cyclical plays at Whitsuntide, in Corpus Christi week, on St. Anne's day, or during any of the regular midsummer festival seasons.

The Corpus Christi Procession. The most splendid of all the church celebrations in England was the Corpus Christi festival, which was instituted by Pope Urban IV in 1264 in honor of the transubstantiated sacrament of the eucharist. Its origin, we are told, was in an alleged vision of a Flemish nun, Juliana, of the city of Liège. The first Thursday after Trinity Sunday was appointed for the day of the feast by Pope Urban, but his death the same year caused the bull to remain inoperative until the time of Pope Clement V, when the festival was finally established at the Council of Vienna as a time of universal celebration. St. Thomas Aquinas was appointed to draw up the holy office, which consisted of hymns, antiphons, *etc.* taken from the symbolical parts of the Old Testament. The leading feature of the service was

the great procession in imitation of the solemn march of the ark under the ancient law. In this the priests and the people ceremoniously joined with torches, banners, and music, and in all their holiday regalia, to escort the host through the streets of the city and to beseech God "that he would please to make all the Congregation present taste efficaciously the Fruits of our Saviour's Resurrection, of whose Passion this Sacrament is a Commemoration".[3]

Growth of the Festival. Of the growth and spread of the Corpus Christi feast on the continent and in England we have very little authentic information. It is not even known when the procession was first introduced into England. Thomas Sprott in his *Chronicles* records that the festival was a confirmed institution by the year 1318; and it may be that during the interval between 1311 and 1318 it had been carried from Rome to other parts of the Christian world, although of this we have no authentic record. The earliest mention of the procession in England which the present writer has been able to find is in 1325, in a copy of the Guild charter of Ipswich, still extant in the local Domesday Book. Other dates, more uncertain, can be judged only approximately from the foundation of the Corpus Christi guilds in the various towns, 1327 at London, 1348 at Coventry, 1408 at York, *etc.* And even then our conclusions are necessa-

[3] Picart, *Ceremonies and Religious Customs*, ii. 43.

rily little more than inferences, especially in the case of the later Corpus Christi guilds, which seem to have been founded to preserve the splendor of the event after popular interest had turned from the procession to the plays.

Plays at Corpus Christi. Likewise the same lack of information exists in regard to the union of the pageants and the procession. It is not known when the great cycles of religious plays came to center around Corpus Christi day in England, though they would seem to have got there within a short time after the procession reached England. The earliest report of Corpus Christi plays in any town in England ascribes them to Chester in 1327. This report, however, cannot be wholly relied upon. In the first place, it is based entirely upon tradition. And in the second, it is first found in a document dated 1544, headed " The proclamation for the Plaies, newly made by William Newhall, clarke of the Pentice, the first yere of his entre ". In this proclamation Newhall states that there were certain " diverse stories of the bible, begynnyng with the creacon and fall of Lucifer, and [ending with the general] jugement of the World " which were devised into a play by a Sir " Henry Fraunces, somtyme monk of this dissolved monastery, who obtayned and gate of Clement, then beyng [bushop of Rome, a thousand] daies of pardon, and of the Busshop of Chester at that time, beyng xlti daies of pardon graunted from

thensforth to every person resortyng in pecible maner with good devocon to here and se the sayd [plaies] from tyme to tyme as oft as they shalbe plaied within this Citie [*and that every person disturbing the same plaies in any manner wise to be accursed by thauctoritie of the said Pope Clement bulls unto such tyme as he or they be absolved therof* (*erased*)], which plaies were devised to the honour of God by John Arneway, then maire of this Citie of Chester, and his brethren, and holl cominalty therof to be brought forthe, declared and plead at the costs and charges of the craftsmen and occupacons of the said Citie, whiche hitherunto have frome tyme to tyme used and performed the same accordingly."[4] This is the first mention of the tradition at Chester, though it is repeated from time to time during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. And Chambers in his *Mediaeval Stage*[5] has shown a considerable degree of probability that it had a basis in fact.

Earliest Records. But with the exception of this early fourteenth century tradition of plays at Chester, it is only after scores of years, in some cases hundreds, that one is able to find authentic record of actual Corpus Christi plays in English towns. The first authentic reference to plays is in

[4] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, pp. 317-18. In other documents of the same and later dates these plays are definitely called Corpus Christi plays. *Cf.* Chambers, ii. 349 ff.

[5] ii. pp. 348-52.

1377 at Beverley, where in 1390 they were again spoken of as an "ancient custom", when the order for the crafts to produce their pageants at Corpus Christi was entered in the Great Guild Book. York comes next with its first record of the plays in 1378, when the bakers were fined and a part of their payment given *a la pagine des ditz Pestours de corpore cristi.* Then come in the order of their earliest extant records: Coventry, 1392; Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1426-7; Salisbury, 1461; Chester, 1462; Worcester, 1467; Lincoln, 1471-2; Canterbury, 1491; Ipswich, 1504; and so on.

Popularity of the Plays. Thus something may be seen of the fragmentary nature of our records of the Corpus Christi stage and of the great difficulty in the way of any connected account of the plays. Yet, fortunately, in the midst of such meagre bits of information, the student has as his aid in gaining a clearer conception of these pageants the fact that the Corpus Christi plays were popular for so long and that these bits of existing information, fragmentary and disconnected though they be, are still numerous enough to furnish a comparatively adequate view of the plays as a whole. Had the plays been less favored among the people of that day we should doubtlessly have been more in the dark than we are now; but that they were immensely popular among all classes is attested by the personnel of the audiences present and by the more than two hundred years of favored patronage which they received from the English people.

Yet, rather oddly, the records that have come down to us do not point with any degree of certainty to more than about twenty-five towns in which plays of the Corpus Christi type were certainly presented. And in all of these where the texts of the plays have come down to us it has been shown that the cycles were more or less intimately connected with each other. For instance, a high degree of probability has been shown that the Chester *Abraham and Isaac* was derived from the same source as the play of that name in the Brome MS.[6] It is certain that they are connected. Likewise it has been proved that the Chester plays were influenced by the York cycle,[7] which also furnished some four or five plays to the Towneley series. And the Coventry pageants have been shown to be closely connected with those of York, Chester, and Towneley. And in the same way it may be supposed that similar influences and connections could be established among the remaining craft cycles if the plays of Beverley, of Ipswich, of Lincoln, Perth, Pontefract, Preston, Worcester, and the other towns were extant. Thus it seems that the Corpus Christi plays did not have so much a widespread vogue as an immense popularity and patronage in

[6] Pollard, *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes*, pp. 184-5; Hohlfeld in *Modern Language Notes*, v. 222-38. Professor Manly holds that the Brome play was derived from the Chester pageant.

[7] Hohlfeld in *Anglia*, xi. 260 ff.; Davidson, *Studies in the English Mystery Plays*, 130 ff.

the comparatively small number of towns where they were presented.

Religious Purposes. The popularity and the persistence of the Corpus Christi plays in England was due largely to the fact that they were a direct exponent of the thought, feeling, and religious attitude of the times; and their purpose, though often perhaps not unmingled with definite economic expectations, was always a serious religious one. The cutlers and braziers of Beverley, for instance, undertook their pageant in 1475 "in honour of God the Father Almighty, and the most glorious Virgin Mary, and to the honour of the glorious confessor St. John of Beverley, and All Saints". Even the fraternities of laboring men claimed to base their unions "in the honor of the blyssed Trinitie and of the Feaste of Corporis Christi and of the blyssed and holy confessor Saynt John of Beverley and of all saynts in heven". And because the day was so sacred and the plays so much to the advancement of Christian living, therefore in 1411 the Keepers of the same town enacted "that every yerr forever . . . the pageant of the play of Corpus Christi which they were accustomed to play" should be given. Beverley, too, was not at all by itself; its neighbor towns throughout England were equally serious.

Commercial Profit. Such was the early attitude of the towns and their citizens toward the plays. But little by little as the years went by the

production of the pageants came to be urged more and more for the sake of personal amusement and the individual commercial profit of the fortunate cities that possessed plays. Hence we are not surprised to find the mercers' guild at Shrewsbury imposing a fine of 12*d.* on any of their brethren who might "happen to ride or goe to Coventre Faire or elleswhere out of the town of Shrewesburye to by or sell".[8] Other towns were recognizing the advantages of the pageants from a business standpoint. Sir William Dugdale, too, writes in his *History of Warwickshire* that he was 'told by some old people, who in their younger years were eye-witnesses of these *Pageants* so acted, that the yearly confluence of people to see that shew was extraordinary great, and yielded no small advantage to this City [Coventry]'.[9] Hence by the latter half of the fifteenth century we are not surprised to find the plays at Worcester given "to the worshippe of god and profite and encrese of the seid cite, and also alle the Craftis that ben contributory to the same", where the "profite and encrese of the seid cite, and also alle the Craftis" is emphasized much more emphatically than "the worshippe of god". This was the later attitude, and in it may be found in great measure the cause of the ultimate decay of the plays. The religious interest of the people had changed and the whole

[8] *Transactions of the Shropshire Arch. Soc.*, viii. 273; Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 395.

[9] Quoted in Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 5.

matter of expense for the pageants was on "the poor commoners", who, as the mayor of Coventry wrote to Thomas Cromwell in 1539, "were at such expense with their plays and pageants that they fared the worse all the year after".[10] But more of this part of the subject later.

[10] Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 358.

II

PREPARATION FOR THE PAGEANTS

Introductory. For about two hundred years after 1325 the Corpus Christi festival was perhaps the greatest public feast day in England. To those towns which were fortunate enough to have plays people flocked from all the neighboring villages, even from far distant cities. And the day was passed with more or less pleasure, religion, and rioting in all the exuberant splendor of a medieval holiday.

Pageant Control by Religious Guilds. But for those who had the entertainment of so many visitors the day was not filled with such unalloyed enjoyment; for the whole procession and all the pageants had to be arranged and planned months in advance. In arranging for the festival the general rule was for the religious guilds to take charge of the church procession alone and the trades crafts to look after the plays. But such was not always the case by any means. On the contrary, we find "a play sett forth by the clergye" advertised in the

banes to the Chester plays, and we hear of scenes being added to the regular cycles by the clergy and other minor officials of the parish churches of Beverley, Bungay, and Salisbury; while at Ipswich and Lincoln, and Norwich in its early days, the whole affair of both the procession and the pageants was entrusted to the oversight of the religious guilds. At Ipswich, however, the Guild of Corpus Christi, which produced the pageants there, was really a reorganization of the old Guild Merchant, which included all the burgesses of the town and thus was practically identical with the town corporation. The same might also be said of the St. Anne's Guild at Lincoln under the supervision of which the plays were produced; for there, too, as at Ipswich, it was "agreed [in 1519] that every man and woman in the city, being able, shall be brother and sister in St. Anne's gild, and pay yearly 4*d.*, man and wife, at the least",[1] thus making the guild almost the same as the town corporation.

Control of the Procession by Religious Guilds. The usual thing, however, was for some leading religious guild to take charge of the procession and to exercise only supervisory control over the subject matter of the plays. At Beverley and other places it was the Corpus Christi Guild; at Coventry it was the Trinity Guild; at Norwich, St. Luke's; and at Canterbury, St. Dunstan's. At Beverley, Coventry, York, and probably in the other towns,

[1] *Hist. MSS Comm.*, xiv. *App.* 8, p. 27.

the Corpus Christi guilds were dedicated especially "to the praise and honour of the most sacred body of our Lord Jesus Christ", in other words, to the proper observance of Corpus Christi day, and the members "were bound to keep a solempne procession, the sacrament being in a shryne borne in the same through the city yerely the Fryday after Corpus Christi day, and the day after to have a solempne mass and dirige".[2] In these cities, as elsewhere, the office of the guilds was to arrange for the procession, get men to march in it, prepare the surplices and the decorations, and make all necessary arrangements for the proper celebration of the feast. Such guilds came in time to be powerful factors in the civic government of their towns. We hear of their owning and renting lands, of their lending money to the lords of the realm, and of their guild-masters even marching "with the Mair for the tyme Being yn all maner of Goynges".

Trades Guilds. When the procession was supervised by the religious guilds—and this was by far the more common, in fact, the almost universal rule,—the presentation of the plays was entrusted, under certain conditions, to the trades guilds, whose chief marks of separate and individual existence as guilds seem, sometimes at least, to have been only the individual candle in the church, a stated position in the procession, and a separate pageant in the play-cycle. The following

[2] Davies, *York Records*, p. 245. *Cf.* Smith, *English Gilds*, pp. 154 and 232.

is a concrete example from the corporation MSS of Beverley:

Of the orders and statutes of the craft of Drapers newly founded by the consent and request of the said Drapers, and grant and license of Adam Newcombe [etc.] the twelve keepers or governors of the town of Beverley, with the consent and assent of all the aldermen of the same town, present in the Gild Hall on S. Mark the Evangelist's day (25th April), A. D. 1493, the underwritten statutes and orders were ordered to be registered and for ever observed, in form following.

First, that there shall be of the same Drapers a brotherhood for the maintenance of a wooden castle to be erected on Mondays in Rogation week yearly for ever next the castle of the Mercers, when the venerable procession with the shrine of the most holy confessor of Christ, John, shall be borne to the chapel of the Blessed Mary the Virgin. . . . And that every master of the aforesaid craft shall sit in his best clothes and apparel in the same castle on the coming of the procession aforesaid. . . . And in the afternoon every brother in the same clothing and apparel shall on the said Monday ride with his brethren, as the custom is, next to the Mercers, under the penalty aforesaid.

Also the said Drapers shall maintain and find among them a candle of wax before the image of S. Michael the Archangel in the church or chapel of the Blessed Mary the Virgin burning on Sundays and other feast-days throughout the year.

Moreover that the said Drapers shall play or cause to be played on the feast of Corpus Christi a play called 'Dooming Pilate', every year when the community of Beverley consent on S. Mark's day that the plays should be played, under the penalty therefor specified in the common register, viz. 40s.[3]

[3] Leach, *Beverley Town Documents*, p. 99.

At other places than Beverley the question of the plays was not made so prominent, but in the towns where plays were presented they always had their weight. And as the separate light, pageant, *etc.* was the distinguishing mark of independent guildship, so the condition of membership in a craft, even of citizenship in the town, came to be a willingness to wear the required livery and to contribute toward the pageant and other expenses. It is on this basis at Beverley in 1493 that we find it "ordande and statute that no Gentilman, yeoman ne craftsman of the towne of Beverley be takyn to worshyp of the towne: bott allonely that berys charge of clothyng, castell and pageaunte within the sayde towne".[4]

Contributory Pageants. But, on account of the heavy expense of the peageant, not all the guilds were able to produce a separate scene. In such cases a weaker craft became affiliated with, or contributory, or assistant, to a stronger one and paid annually toward the production of the other craft's plays. Sometimes the poorer company paid a definite, stipulated, annual amount toward the other's pageant, as at Coventry, where the butchers paid annually "xvj*s.* viij*d.*" toward the whittawer's pageant, and the cappers and fullers "xiij*s.* iiij*d.*" toward the girdlers' "priste & pageant".[5] At other times each member of the contributory craft

[4] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS,* p. 49.
[5] *Coventry Leet Book,* pp. 559, 565.

paid a fixed amount, as for instance at York in 1517, when "it was agreed that for a peace to be hade betwixt the Skynners and the vestment makers that from hensforth the vestment-makers shall pay yerly to the brỳngyng furth of the Skynners pageant, euery maister viij*d.* & euery jenaman iiij*d.*, & no more, to be paide wt oute denye, yerly, to the chamberlayne handes affore the fest of Witsonday, and then the skynners to resceyue it atte chamberlayne handes, and they not to be charged wt the repparacons of there pageant".[6] At other times still, as with the Coventry tilers and pinners, who were contributory to the wrights, there was no stated amount of assessment, but all the members were "to pay & bere ȝerely after theire porcion as other wrightes doo towardes þe charge of their pageant".[7]

Responsibility for the Pageants. In such cases as these the responsibility for the pageant seems to have been sometimes removed from the associate guild or guilds and to have devolved entirely on the independent craft, which alone stood charged with the play.—

1547.—It is also enacted that the Cowpers of this Citie shall frome hensfurth be associat wt the Tilers & pynners and bere suche charges as thei have doon in tymes past And that the Cowpers shalbe the hedd & cheffest of theim & stand charged wt the pagyaunt.[8]

[6] Smith, *York Plays*, Introd., p. xl.
[7] *Coventry Leet Book*, p. 564.
[8] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 11.

At other times, however, there seems to have been no direct responsibility on any one craft, but, rather, they all alike, under the leadership of their masters, undertook the charge.—

It alsoe appearinge to us that they [the painters and glaziers] have beene tyme out of minde one brotherhood for the costs and expenses of the plaie of the Shepperds Wach with the Angells hyme.[9]

12 Henry VIII. [1520] 'the Stuards of the Founders and Pewters agree with the Stewards of the Smiths to bere and draw the Whitson Playe and Corpus Christi', &c.[10]

Attitude toward the Plays. Such equality of responsibility, however, was the exception rather than the rule, and we find the minor crafts continually chafing under the compulsory assessments for the plays of other companies. In fact, in the early days of the pageants it seems to have been the aim of every guild, if possible, to have its own livery, produce its own play, and put itself on an equality with the other crafts.—

Also it is desyryd by the Drapers that thai shall be in clothyng by thame selfe; And to have a castell and a pageante as other occupacyons hafe. Such a pageante as the xii Governers wyll assigne thame to, upon payne of forfettour to the comynalte of xl*s*.[11]

[9] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 316.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

[11] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 49.

From this it must not be inferred that the production of a play was always a pleasure and that the companies were continually vying with each other in their zeal to obtain possession of a pageant. This may have been the early attitude, but in time, from being an honor, the presentation of a play became a duty, later even a burden. Hence, in later years we find numerous petitions, like that of the Chester cappers in 1523, praying the city council "to exonerate and discharge theym of and for the bringinge forthe"[12] of their plays.

City Council. As in this case at Chester, so in other cities the council was a necessary adjunct in settling matters relating to the production of the pageants. This is what might be expected too; for from first to last the plays were necessarily a burden on the crafts, and, especially among the associate guilds who had no further participation in the pageants than the payment of their annual dues, one might expect to find certain companies attempting to escape their full duties, thus making some sort of board of arbitration an absolute necessity. In the natural course of change, too, the wealth and power of the different guilds was continually varying, making it impossible for a once wealthy but now impoverished company to continue producing a play, while perhaps at the same time a stronger brotherhood was escaping the onus

[12] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, pp. 316-17 *n.*

of a pageant altogether. And in the matter of contributions, with the constant encroachments in trade of one guild upon another, it often became a question of serious doubt to what guild the associate crafts ought to be contributory. In such cases the question was taken to the "fullwurshipfull Meir" and his council, who not only decided such matters as these, but aided in the collection of the "pagent pencys" and exercised a general oversight over the presentation of the plays.

Assessments. The pageant expenses, however, were almost altogether on the guilds, who became responsible for the pageant-wagon, repairing, cleaning, decorating, and strewing it with rushes, for the payment of the actors, their costumes and refreshments, for the play-book and the prompter —in fact, for practically everything. These expenses were met by different methods: by fines from the members, by contributions from associate guilds, by special levies known as "pagent pencys", and in various other ways. But the individual assessments were never excessively high. At Coventry a journeyman weaver paid only four pence; at Newcastle-on-Tyne a tailor's hireling paid threepence; and at Beverley a journeyman smith paid twopence. A master tailor at Newcastle-on-Tyne paid seven pence; a master capper at Beverley eight pence when there was a play and sixpence when there was none; a master smith at the same place four pence when there was a play;

and a master cardmaker, saddler, mason, or painter at Coventry, twelve pence. None of these assessments, it will be seen, can be considered very large when one remembers that the wages of the average journeyman of the time ranged from three to five pence a day and those of the master craftsmen from four to nine. And in the way of total annual assessments the amount was not usually large. The total contribution of the Coventry butchers to the whittawers' pageant in 1495 was only 16*s.* 8*d.*, while the cappers and fullers in the same year paid 13*s.* 4*d.* to the girdlers, and the skinners and barbers only 6*s.* 8*d.* to the cardmakers.[13]

Pageant Expenses. The cause of such relatively small assessments on the members and their journeymen was the lessening of actual pageant expenses through money from fines and other similar sources. At Beverley, for instance, a leet was passed in 1475-6 that every "cardcobler, cuttiler vocatus *an hawker,* plomars, furbiorers, and pewtrers qui vendunt aliqua bona infra villam per hawkyng" should contribute 6*d.* to the pageant of the cutlers and braziers.[14] The bakers also lightened their expenses by enacting in 1547 that "every foreigner that brings bread to Beverley to sell, shall pay yearly to the Alderman of Bakers toward the charges of vesture and 'pageand' of the Occupation 4*d*".[15] And in some cities the companies

[13] Harris, *Coventry Leet Book,* pp. 559, 564-5.
[14] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS,* p. 102.
[15] *Ibid.,* p. 88.

got help from their brother guilds in neighboring towns, as at Coventry, where the tilers in 1501 received a contribution of 5*s.* from the Stoke tilers.

Collection of Fines. The method of collecting these duties and assessments was by the appointment of a special warden or pageant-master, as at York, who collected all pageant dues. And if he failed, then the matter became one for the ruling of the town council. This council, too, seems to have been severe in its methods of collections; for at Chester in 1575 we find an entry that "Whereas Andrew Tailer of the saide citie tailer usinge the occupation of Diers within the same citie was taxed & sessed to beare with the company of Dyers by the same company for the charges in the setting furth of their parte & pagent of the plaies set furth & plaied in this citie at Midsomer last past comonly called Whytson plaies & by the saide company rated & appointed to paie for that entent iiis. viiid. which he refused to paie and whereas upon the complainte of the saide compeny of Diers against the saide Andrew to the right worshipfull Sir John Savage knight late maior of the same citie in the tyme of his mairalty wherupon the same Andrew beinge called before the same then maior in that behalf denied to paie the same & therefore the said Andrew Tailler was then and ther by the said then maior comytted to warde where he hetherunto hath remayned".[16]

[16] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, pp. 304-5 *n.*

And in the same way that the town council held the members responsible for their assessments, so it held the pageant-master for his play, or the craft through the pageant-master. In 1392, for instance, a penalty of 40*s.* was assessed the Beverley smiths for their failure to present their play of the *Ascension* on Corpus Christi day; but "because they acted obediently, therefore the 40*s.* were re-delivered".[17] At Coventry in 1460 the fine was higher, it being "ordeyned þat euery Craft þat hath pagant to pley In, that þe pagant be made redy & brought furth to pley, vppon þe peyn of Cs. to be reased of iiij maistirs of the Craftes þat so offend".[18]

Expenses on the Corporation. The notable thing about these regulations for the plays is that, although the production of the pageants was required by the city councilmen, yet the expenses as a rule were almost altogether on the crafts. Exceptions, it is true, are to be found here and there, but many of them on close examination will be found to be seeming rather than real. For instance, one would judge on first thought that the Beverley corporation must have been at considerable expense in purchasing pageants and stage properties for their Corpus Christi plays; for we hear of a certain John of Erghes, "hayrer", coming before the Twelve Keepers of the town of Beverley in 1391 and undertaking "for himself and his fellows

[17] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 66.
[18] *Coventry Leet Book*, ii. 312.

of the same craft to play a certain play called Paradise sufficiently, viz., every year on the Feast of Corpus Christi when other craftsmen of the same town play, during the life of the said John of Erghes, at his own cost, willing and granting that he will pay to the community of the town for every default in the play aforesaid 10*s.*, Nicholas Fauconer being his surety. And he also undertook to re-deliver to the twelve Keepers of the town for the time being, at the end of his life, all necessaries which he has belonging to the said play under penality of 20*s.*, viz., one car ('karre'), eight hasps ('hespis'), eighteen staples ('stapils'), two visors ('visers'), two angels' wings ('winges angeli'), one pine pole ('fir sparr'), one serpent ('worme'), two pairs of linen boots, two pairs of shirts, one sword".[19] One might surmise from this unique entry that the Beverley corporation had at some time experienced real sorrow for the craftsmen and had allowed itself during its moment of grief to purchase the necessary properties for the plays; but later laws of the same town make it seem far more probable that the pageant and costumes lent to John of Erghes were once the property of some poor craft that had been compelled on account of poverty to surrender its play and to buy release with its pageant-car and costumes. And in the same way many other expenses apparently borne by the corporation in the production of the

[19] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 66.

plays may be shown to be seeming rather than real.

Expense of Entertainment. In general, therefore, it may be said that the crafts produced the plays at the will of the councilmen, but at their own expense, and that the mayor and his men entertained at the expense of the city treasury any notable visitors who might come to the festival. For example, at York in 1478 we have a record of the mayor and aldermen at Corpus Christi. The details are enumerated as follows:

Expenses at the Feast of Corpus Christi.

And in expenses incurred this year by the mayor, aldermen, and many others of the council of the chamber at the Feast of Corpus Christi, seeing and directing the play in the house of Nicholas Bewyk, according to custom, together with 40*s.* 4*d.* paid for red and white wine, given and sent to knights, ladies, gentlemen, and nobles then being within the city; and also 9*s.* paid for the rent of the chamber, and 3*s.* 4*d.* paid to one preaching and delivering a sermon on the morrow of the said feast, in the cathedral church of St. Peter of York, after the celebration of the procession, according to the like custom, £4 18*s.* 11*d.*[20]

At Coventry in 1457, too, we note that, "On Corporis Christi yeven at nyght then next suying came the quene from kelyngworth to Coventre; at which tyme she wold not be met, but came preuely to se the play there on the morowe; . . . At which tyme the Meyre and his brethern send vnto her a present which was sich as here suyth: That is to wit, ccc paynemaynes, a pipe of Rede wyne, a

[20] Davies, *York Records*, pp. 75 and 77.

dosyn Capons of haut grece, a dosyn of grete fat Pykes, a grete panyer full of Pescodes and another panyer full of pipyns and Orynges and ij Cofyns of Counfetys and a pot of grene Gynger".[21] And at Chester in 1575 "it was ordered, concluded, & agried upon by the maior, aldermen, sheriffs and common counsell of the saide city that the plays commonly called the Whitson plays at Mydsomer nexte cominge shall be sett furth & plaied in such orderly manner & sorte as the same have been accustomed, with suche correction and amendemente as shall be thaught conveniente by the saide maior, & all charges of the saide plays to be supported & borne by thinhabitaunts of the saide citie as have been heretofore used".[22] So, on the whole, it may be safely said that the city authorities, as such, were at comparatively small expense with the plays, their chief office being to exercise a general supervisory control over the pageants as performed by the guilds.

In the way of supervision one of the first things the council had to decide by way of preparation for the festival was whether the plays were to be produced at all and what scenes, if any assignments different from last year were to be made, were to be given to the different crafts. In most of the towns during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the pageants were an annual event, but in

[21] *Coventry Leet Book*, ii. 300.

[22] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 321.

some places, as at Beverley and Worcester, their presentation was a subject for annual decision. At Beverley the plays were regularly voted upon on St. Mark's day; at Worcester the council had a leet "that yerly, at the lawday holdyn at hokday, that the grete enquest shalle provide and ordeyn whepер the pageant shuld go that yere or no. And so yerly for more surete".[23]

Assignment of the Plays. When or how often the individual scenes were assigned to the crafts is not known; nor do we know certainly what the basis of such assignments was. Some attempt seems to have been made to adapt the character of the scene to be performed to the vocation of the company by which it was acted,—what Chambers has aptly termed "dramatic appropriateness". It cannot be taken as a matter of mere accident, for instance, that the bakers at Beverley, Chester, and York were assigned the play of the *Last Supper,* that the cooks at Beverley and Chester should have the *Harrowing of Hell,* that the watermen at Beverley and Chester, the shipwrights at York and Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the fishers and mariners at York should produce the plays dealing with Noah, nor that the goldsmiths at Beverley, York, and Newcastle-on-Tyne should furnish the play of the *Magi.* This adaptation of pageant scene to the trade of the guild, although frequent, could not of course be carried out in every case. The reasons

[23] Smith. *English Gilds,* p. 385.

for such assignments do not seem to have been altogether sentimental, but because the practice of a trade by a craft frequently enabled the members to act more effectively in certain plays. For example, the shipwrights would know how to handle the ark better, more quickly, and more easily than any other guild; the bakers could furnish the food for the *Last Supper;* and the goldsmiths, the jewels and the ornaments for the *Magi.*

Patron Saint. At other times, however, the reason for the assignment seems to have been very different and, at the same time, more reasonable. This was when the companies were assigned plays in which their patron saints held a prominent part. At Beverley, for example, the barbers, whose candle burnt in St. Mary's Church before the image of St. John the Baptist, agreed "that they play or cause to be played a pageant of the aforesaid S. John baptising Christ in the Jordan";[24] and the tanners, whose "Searge" burnt before the image of Christ on the cross in the high altar of St. Mary's chapel, played the *Takinge of the Crose.* At Coventry also the mercers, whose fraternity was "in honour of the Assumption" produced the *Assumption and Appearance of Mary to Thomas,*[25] and at Lincoln and Beverley the "Prestes" chose for their scene "to be played and shown in the pro-

[24] Leach, *Beverley Town Documents,* p. 109.

[25] Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays,* Introd., pp. xvi-xvii.

cession to be made by the citizens" the *Coronacion of Our Lady.*

Variations in the Assignments. Such seem to have been the principles which governed the assignment of plays, which, of course, met with many variations from time to time. The assignment of more than one pageant to a craft was such a variation, but one which was made occasionally and which seems to have been made on the basis of wealth. At Beverley in 1411 the bowers and fletchers presented both the "Fleyng into Egip" and the "Habraham and Isaak";[26] the merchants at the same place produced both *Blak Herod* and *Domesday* in 1520; and in 1454 the guild of the bricklayers and plasterers at Newcastle-on-Tyne furnished the *Creation of Adam* and the *Flight into Egypt* plays.[27] Other examples of variation in the regular principle of assignments are to be found in the play by "the colliges and prestys" at Beverley on "Corpus Xri day", 1544, and the pageant of the *Assumption* furnished by the "worshipfull wyves" of Chester in 1477. Likewise, plays by friars, minor clerks, and religious guilds are not infrequently mentioned; but the unique honor of having a play promoted by "reverend persons of the worthier sort" was reserved for Beverley. In this case it seems that certain well-to-do men of the city had been accustomed to escape the burdens

[26] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS,* p. 99.

[27] Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays,* pp. xxxix-xl.

of a pageant at Corpus Christi tide; whereupon "moderate dealing was held with William Rolleston, merchant, Nicholas of Ryse, Adam Tirwitt, John of Holme, William Wilton, Adam Barker, and other reverend persons of the worthier sort not having liveries yearly like others of the rest of the crafts, and not taking part in plays otherwise, that the said worthies, though they had not before done so, should on Corpus Christi day erect a pageant, and support it at their own cost, and cause a play to be played honourably and fittingly". The result was that the "twelve Keepers" got together and "rendered their judgment in this form: That the aforesaid worthies toward the Feast of Corpus Christi next following the present year should, by means of four of them and under the supervision of the twelve Keepers of the community for the time being, at their own cost and charges cause to be made an honest and honourable pageant, and an honest play to be played in the same, under penalty of 40*s.* to be levied from the same worthies to the use of the community aforesaid".[28]

"The Originalle Booke." Besides looking after any possible changes in the regular assignment of plays, an additional duty of the council was the choice of the text of the *originalle booke,* the *regenall, rygynall, oragynall, registrum,* or Corpus Christi play-book by whatever name it might be called; for, besides allotting the scenes to

[28] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS,* p. 67.

each guild, the aldermen must know what was to be spoken therein. At Beverley this decision was made on St. Mark's day (April 25)[29] and at Coventry probably sometime in the early part of March; for on the second of the month we find the reviser of the two extant Coventry plays writing: "Tys matter nevly translate be Robert Croo in the yere of oure Lorde God M^{l}v^{c}xxxiiij^{te} then beyng meyre Mastur Palmar beddar and Rychard Smythe an [Herre] Pyxley masturs of the Weywars thys boke yendide the seycond day of Marche in yere above seyde".[30] A new selection of course was not made every year, since the same list of plays and the same material would often serve for several years, possibly for scores of years. Yet changes in, and hence new selections for, the "originalle booke" were often a necessity, since this was the register of all the plays for each town. This book remained always in the possession of the town council for safe keeping, and to it the crafts came to copy their individual scenes. We do not know what the cost was of making this play-book as a whole, but it would seem to have been high according to the value of money in those days. The Coventry drapers in 1572 paid ten shillings for "wryttyng" their scene, a price which would have made the play-book containing all the scenes amount to £5. And a corresponding price paid

[29] Leach, *Beverley Town Documents*, p. 99.

[30] Sharp, *Weaver's Pageant of the* Presentation in the Temple, p. 85.

for the forty-eight scenes of the York cycle would have run the whole register up to £24.

The Waits. The pageants having been determined upon, the plays assigned to the various companies, and the play-books copied, the next thing in order for the council was the advertisement of the festival. This advertising was done by means of the city waits, who rode throughout the town and published the news of the forthcoming plays. At Beverley in 1423, for example, we find an item of *20d.* paid to "the waits of the town, on the morrow of Ascension Day, riding with the said proclamation [the banes] of Corpus Christi through the whole town".[31] And at Chester we learn that "yarlye before these [plays] were played, there was a man fitted for ye purpose which did ride, as I take it vpon St George daye throughe ye Cittie [of Chester], and there published the tyme and the matter of ye playes in breife, which was called 'ye readinge of the banes'".[32] In this case, however, the city crier served as a wait. Chambers states[33] that the stewards of each craft rode with the Chester city crier, and it would seem probable that the actors themselves sometimes went along; for in 1561 we find *2s.* paid for "ryding the banes, our horses and ourselves, of which Symyon was one".[34] In other towns than Chester from two to

[31] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS,* p. 160.
[32] Furnivall, *Digby Mysteries,* p. xix.
[33] *Mediaeval Stage,* ii. 354.
[34] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns,* p. 306 *n.*

four regular waits served. At York in 1461 there were three; three at Lincoln in 1514; two at Beverley in 1423, three in 1438; and four at Coventry in 1423. In 1439 at Coventry they even organized themselves into a band and "ordeyned that they Trumpet schall haue the rule off the whaytes, and off hem be Cheffe".[35] In consequence of this organization we hear of their wearing regular liveries. Numerous entries of expenses "for the Waits' liveries and badges" are to be found at Beverley, Coventry, Lincoln, York, and other cities. At Coventry in 1442 the waits were "to have their livery on condition that they have a trumpet, and the escutcheons (badges) on security being found; that is to say, they shall have a dozen of cloth worth 20*s.* due to them for their livery from the wardens, against Corpus Christi".[36] At Lincoln in 1553 the waits were "to have their liveries of red cloth as they had last year",[37] and at York in 1461-2 there is an expense of 26*s.* "paid to William Chymnay, for twelve ells of Musterdevelers [coarse velvet], bought for three minstrels of the City".[38] Their badge of office was usually a shield, which hung from a silver collar about the minstrel's neck. It was so costly that at Coventry it was delivered to the wait only upon security, and

[35] Harris, *Coventry Leet Book*, p. 189.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 200.
[37] *Hist. MSS Comm.*, xiv. *App.* 8, p. 47.
[38] Davies, *York Records*, p. 13.

at Beverley was kept by the city and delivered to the minstrel "on occasions when needed".—

4 April, for two silver shields ('scutis') in honour of the community, to be yearly delivered to the waits at the pleasure of the Keepers for the time being, under sufficient sureties, the price of the shield 31*s*.[39]

At Lincoln, instead of being shields, these badges took the form of crosses and, as at most places, were charged with the city arms.

Duties and Decorations of the Minstrels. The number of the waits, as we have seen above, was usually three, and their instruments were generally a fife and a trumpet, to which a drum was often added. Sharp gives a note of expense from the Coventry treasurer's accounts which will serve to give some idea of the decorations carried by the waits on their instruments:—

1587.—D'd to Goldstone for the Trumpet the 15 of June doble taffata sarcenet Crimson & greene viijs Red & grene strings w'th buttons red frenge & silke ijs jd.[40]

This was in 1587, seven years after the regular Corpus Christi plays were laid down, but it may be taken as probably differing very slightly from an earlier custom of appending banners resplendent with the city arms to the trumpets of the waits as they rode through their own and their neighbor cities proclaiming the pageants for the next Corpus

[39] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 161.
[40] *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 209.

Christi festival and attracting attention by means of their fife, trumpet, and drum.

The Banes.

Lordings Royall and Reverentt
Lovelie ladies that here be lentt
Sovereigne Citizens hether am I sent
A message for to say.

I pray you all that be present
That you will here with good intent
And all your eares to be lent
Hertfull I you pray.

Our worshipfull mair of this Citie
With all his royall cominaltie
Solem pagens ordent hath he
At the fest of Whitsonday tyde.[41]

Thus the crier of the Chester banes began his proclamation on St. George's day before the festival. This preliminary announcement of the forthcoming pageants, known as the banes, or banns, was cried in the market-place, in all the principal streets of the city, and probably in the neighboring towns. As seen from the extract above, the banes were a versified announcement of what the plays were to be, especially prepared and written out by the waits before starting on their ride. At Beverley in 1423 we have a note of 6*s*. 8*d*. paid to "Master Thomas Bynham, Friar

[41] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 307.

Preacher, for making and composing the banns ('les banes') before the Corpus Christi play proclaimed through the whole town, 4 May".[42] And other notices of payments for the banes and to the waits for riding are to be found from time to time.

Payment of the Waits. Such were the preliminary duties of the waits with reference to the Corpus Christi plays, for which they seem to have been well paid—so well, in fact, that the position became a most desirable one. At Beverley they were elected annually by the town council and were paid twenty shillings a year for their duties,[43] but were given a fee of ten pence each extra "on the morrow of Ascension Day, [for] riding with the said proclamation of Corpus Christi through the whole town".[44] At Chester also, when the city crier delivered the proclamation of the plays, we find extra payments made.—

1554. For ryding the banes xiiid. the City Cryer ridd.
1561. Cost of ryding the banes, our horses and ourselves, of which Symyon was one, iis.
1567. For the banes id.; Gloves and drink iiiid.; Bred for our horses that day we rod the banes xiid.[45]

And at Coventry and York the waits were regarded as so important that, in addition to their salary

[42] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 160.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[45] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 306 *n.*

from the city, they were voted an annual tax from the different classes of citizens according to wealth and rank. And in order that the waits might be sure of collecting their legal allowance from the townspeople it was voted at Coventry [1460] "þat an honest man in euery ward shuld be assigned be þe Meir to go with þe waytes to gader thier wages quarterly etc. at the peticion of þe wates then beyng".[46] "Allso [1423] þat thai haue of euery hall place jd., of euery Cottage ob., euery quarter; & aftur þer beryng bettur to be rewardyd. And also þai orden þat thei shall haue ij men of euery ward euery quarter to help them to gathur þer Quarterage."[47]

Street Cleaning. The final preparations for the festival were made by the council when they "ordeyned" the cleaning of the streets and assigned stations where the plays were to be given.—

Whoever lives between the Bear and Smithford-brook to pay 4*d.* towards clearing the river or provide a labourer to do it before the festival.[48]

Gardens beyond the walls are to be done away with before Whitsuntide or 6*s.* 8*d.* fine.[49]

Every one having lands or tenements lying by the river from Crow-mill to Gosford-gate, to cleanse it opposite his tenement before Whitsuntide, or 20*s.* fine levied by the mayor for this clearing. And the mayor to see to it that

[46] Harris, *Coventry Leet Book*, p. 307.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

where the river has been encroached on by any one, that it shall be put right.[50]

It must be remembered that the Corpus Christi celebration was the greatest public event of the year, when thousands of people from all the neighboring sections flocked into the city to see the sights and help celebrate the day; and the cleaning of the streets was but one of the many numerous preparations for the coming event. Other preparations were the decorations, the banners, the flags, and the gay pendants.

> The streittis war all hung with tapestrie,
> Great was the press of peopill dwelt about.

Station Banners. Then the evening before the plays were to begin the stations where the pageants were to halt were all marked with banners bearing the arms of the city. At York we find among the list of "Expenses necessary" for the year 1416 4*d.* "paid for a banner of Thomas Gaunt, for the Corpus Christi play, at the inn of Henry Watson"; and "Margaret the sempstress" was paid 3*d.* "for the repair of the banners of the Corpus Christi play".[51] There must have been something like twelve of these banners; for, since 1399, the plays had been regularly given at twelve stations, and, though the records show that the exact playing places were changed the following

[50] Harris, *Coventry Leet Book*, p. 227.
[51] Davies, *York Records*, pp. 63 and 65.

year, 1417, yet we find that they still continued to be twelve in number.—

> For the convenience of the citizens and of all strangers coming to the said feast that all the pageants of the play called Corpus Christi Play should . . . begin to play, first—
>
> At the gates of the pryory of the Holy Trinity in Mikel-gate, next
> At the door of Robert Harpham, next
> At the door of the late John Gyseburn, next
> At Skelder-gate-hend and North-strete-hend, next
> At the end of Conyng-strete towards Castel-gate, next
> At the end of Jubir-gate, next
> At the door of Henry Wyman, deceased, in Conyng-strete, then
> At the Common Hall at the end of Conyng-strete, then
> At the door of Adam del Brygs, deceased, in Stayne-gate, then
> At the end of Stayn-gate at the Minster-gates, then
> At the end of Girdler-gate in Peter-gate, and lastly
> Upon the Pavement.[52]

At York the number of stations at which the plays were given varied between twelve and sixteen; at Beverley in 1467 there were eight;[53] and at Coventry, probably ten.[54] At Chester we do not know the exact number of stations, but only that

[52] Smith, *York Plays,* Introd., pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

[53] Chambers says, *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 138, that there were only six stations at Beverley, but in this he is manifestly wrong. Compare *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS,* pp. 135, 143.

[54] Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays,* xiii-xiv.

the plays "first beganne at ye Abbaye gates; & when the firste pagiente was played at ye Abbaye gates, then it was wheeled from thence to the pentice at ye highe crosse before ye Mayor; and before that was donne, the seconde came, and ye firste wente in-to the water-gate streete, and from thence vnto ye Bridge-streete, and soe all, one after an other, tell all ye pagiantes weare played, appoynted for ye firste daye, and so likewise for the seconde & the thirde daye".[55]

Station Renting. What the earliest reasons were for assigning the playing stations to particular locations is not known, but they are conjectured to have been the places where the host in the procession halted on its journey through the streets.[56] As the plays and the procession gradually grew apart from each other, however, the assignment of stations in certain towns, at least at York, was influenced by more worldly and more lucrative motives. In 1399 at York the city council, because of complaint from the commons of the city that "the play and pageants of Corpus Christi day, which put them to great cost and expense, were not played as they ought to be, because they were exhibited in too many places, to the great loss and annoyance of the citizens, and of the strangers repairing to the city on that day", determined that there should be twelve stations; but in 1417 they

[55] Furnivall, *Digby Mysteries*, p. xix.
[56] *Cf.* Davidson, *English Mystery Plays*, p. 91 ff.

decided that 'it was inconvenient, and contrary to the profit of the city, that the play should be played every year in the same certain places, and no others'. It was therefore voted 'that those persons should be allowed to have the play before their houses who would pay the highest price for the privilege, but that no favour should be shewn, the public advantage of the whole community being only considered'.[57] Accordingly we find "the mayor and commonalty" in 1478 granting for twelve years to Henry and Thomas Dawson, pikemongers, a lease of '*Ludum sive lusum corporis xp'i annuatim ludendum in alta strata de Ousegate inter tenementa in tenura prefatorum Henrici et Thome, scilicet, apud finem pontis Use ex parte orientali*'.[58] For this lease the Dawsons paid an annual rent of twelve shillings, and no doubt were accustomed to realize considerable profit by accommodating spectators for the shows. It seems, however, that not all the playing places were rented; for we learn that no rent was ever paid for the station before the Trinity gates, or for 'the Common Hall, a place where "my Lady Mayres and her systers [i. e. wives of the aldermen] lay", or for the Pavement, a public place in the midst of the city'.[59] The Pavement plainly was exempt because it was a public place; "my Lady Mayres's" place was free

[57] Davies, *York Records*, p. 241.

[58] Quoted in Davies, *York Records*, p. 241.

[59] Smith, *York Plays*, Introd., p. xii.

because it was there that the nobility and the royal visitors of the city were entertained; and we shall see later that the station at Trinity church was not taxed because from old time the plays were first viewed there and censored by the clergy.

Stations Sought. At other towns than York we do not hear of any rental of stations on the part of the city corporations, though we do find various lawsuits over rooms and houses from which the pageants might be viewed. At Chester there is a well known record of a suit "betwene John Whitmore, Esquier, upon thon partie and Anne Webster, widow, tenaunt to George Ireland, Esquier, upon thother partie for and concerning the claime righte and title of a mansion, Rowme, or Place for the Whydson plaies in the Brudg gate strete within the Cyty of Chester which varyaunce hath bene here wayed and considered by Ric. Dutton, Esquier, Maior of the Cyty of Chester, and Wm. Gerrard, Esquier, Recorder of the said Cyty, by whom it is now ordered that forasmuche as the said Mistres Webster and other the tenants of the said Mr. Ireland have had their place and mansyon in the said place now in varyaunce in quiet sort for ii tymes past whan the said plaies were plaied. That the said Anne Webster in quiet sort for this presente tyme of whydsontide during all the tyme of the said plaies shall enjoy and have her mansyon, place, and the said place and Rome now in varyaunce".[60]

[60] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 304 *n.*

From these and other instances, as well as from "þe request of þe Inhabitaunts [of Coventry, 1494] dwellyng in Gosseford-strete that þe pageantes ȝerely frohensfurth be sette & stande at þe place there of olde tyme vsed [in Gosford Street], lymyt & appoynted", it may be judged that the pageant stations were much sought after by the residents of the different wards.

Appearance of the Stations. Of the actual appearance of these stations there is perhaps little to be said, except that they were made in the ordinary street, street-corner, or inn-yard, and that the actual spot where the pageant-wagon was to halt was marked, as we have seen, with a banner bearing the arms of the city. An examination of the local maps of the towns where these plays were given shows that the places selected for the representation of the pageants, as nearly as we can identify them now, were generally in the broadest streets of the town. For example, Dr. Craig has identified all the stations in Coventry [61] as nearly as it seems possible, and in every case they were placed in the wide streets of the city. Gosford Street, Jordan Well, Much Park Street out at Newgate end, Little Park Street,—all were broad and ample in space for the pageants and their audiences. All the houses in the immediate neighborhood of the pageant stations were required by law to be decorated with flags, banners, garlands, and other

[61] *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, pp. xiii-xiv.

holiday regalia, and each guild had its own scaffold on which its members and their friends sat to watch the plays. These scaffolds were variously known as stages, mansions, rooms, and castles, and were built by the tradesmen "of tree upon Monday in the Rogacion weeke, in the honor of Gode and the glorious confessor Saynt John". They were covered and decorated "in an ornamental fashion"[62] like the pageant-wagons themselves, and at Beverley in 1460 the directors of the pageants had a separate one in which they sat "to see and govern the pageants".[63]

Pageant-Master. Thus we have seen the general preparations and ordinances made by the city council in getting ready for the festival season, —the assignment of plays and playing-places, the proclamation of the banes, the clearing of the streets, and the other minor duties devolving on the mayor and aldermen. In the meantime, however, the trades companies were equally busy; for theirs was the difficult and the crucial part of the celebration. The organization of their activities as a rule was under the general direction of the pageant-master, or warden, or alderman of the pageant, who was elected by the guild and was held generally responsible for the production of the plays. Something of his duties at Coventry may be seen from the following:

[62] Leach, *Beverley Town Documents*, pp. 34-5.
[63] Leach in *Furnivall Miscellany*, p. 215.

These men above writen wer acordid & agreed on munday next befor palme sonday Anno H. (6th) xxxj. [1453,] That Thom's Colclow skynner ffro this day forth shull have þe Rewle of þe pajaunt unto þe end of xij yers next folowing he for to find þe pleyers and all þt longeth þerto all þe seide time save þe keper of the craft shall let bring forth þe pajant & find Cloys þt gon abowte þe pajant and find Russhes þerto and every wytson-weke who þt be kepers of þe crafte shall dyne wt Colclow & every mastr ley down iiijd and Colclow shall have ȝerely ffor his labor xlvjs viijd & he to bring in to þe mastr on sonday next aftr corps xpi day þe originall & ffech his vij nobullez and Colclow must bring in at þe latr end of þe timez all þe garments þt longen to þe pajant as good as þey wer delyvered to hym.[64]

Other examples of such "play lettine" can be traced at other towns, but the case of Colclow was an extreme one, the more usual thing being for the guilds to keep the management of their plays more directly under their own control. Such a custom was that at York where each company appointed two "pageant-masters" whose duty it was to collect the "pajaunt silver", account for it and the playing gear, and train the actors in their parts. If they failed to produce their pageant, or if their play was not up to the standard demanded by the council, then both they and their company were fined for their neglect. At Beverley we find two shillings collected from "Richard Trollop, Alderman of Payntours, for that his Play of 'Lez 3 Kyngs of Colleyn' was played badly and disorderly, in contempt of the whole community, in the presence of many strangers", and 12*d.* from

[64] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 15.

"Richard Gaynstang, Alderman of Talours, for that his Play of 'Slepyng Pilate', was badly played, against the ordinance made in that behalf".[65]

Revision of Plays. At Coventry the pageant-master was elected "a-pon saynt Thomas day in Christinmas weke", and he seems to have begun his active duties early in the new year; for sometime in March or April, as we have seen above, the plays were probably determined upon by the aldermen and turned over to the pageant-master for safe keeping, for any necessary revisions, and for copying the different parts. Considerable care and effort too, even rivalry, seem to have been spent in the rewriting and revising of old scenes for the coming pageants. At Chester in 1575 we find a record of 18*d*. "spent at Tyer to heare 2 playes before the Aldermen to take the best".[66] And when available plays and writers were not to be had at home, the councilmen went outside their town and got what they wanted. Consequently we find among the "Common Expenses" at Beverley in 1520 a note of "7*s*. spent by the 12 Governors being with Sir William Pyers, poet, at Edmund Metcalff's house to make an agreement with him for transposing ['transposicione'] the Corpus Christi Play", and "3*s*. 4*d*. given to the said William Pyers for his expenses and labour in coming

[65] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 172.

[66] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 305 *n*.

from Wresill to Beverley for the alteration of the same ".[67]

Causes of the Revisions. It is the large number of these alterations and transpositions that has given modern students so much trouble in understanding the texts of the plays and the methods of presentation. That any of the complete cycles were ever played just as we have them to-day in the MSS is extremely doubtful. The York spicers' scene, for example, would seem never to have been produced on any stage; for the sixteenth-century marginal note in the MS, probably written when the play-book was submitted to Dean Matthew Hutton in 1579, says: "Doctor, this matter is newly mayde, wherof we haue no coppy ".[68] And the marshalls', cordwainers', and the sporiers and lorimers' plays in the same cycle were all rewritten after the full register was compiled. Likewise, at Chester the entire cycle seems to be a late copy of the plays made after the pageants were at an end. And the Towneley plays, Mr. Pollard tells us, are the work of three separate hands covering a period of something like a half-century. These revisions and alterations, it may be safely said, were made for one of four chief reasons: (1) because some craft had fallen into poverty and the matter in its play had to be incorporated with that of one of the preceding or of the succeeding pageants, like the

[67] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS,* p. 171.
[68] Smith, *York Plays,* p. 93 *n.*

Chester drapers' *Creation, Fall, and Cain's Sin* or the Towneley *Conspiracy, Supper, and Arrest of Christ,* each of which seems to be a telescoping of two plays; (2) because a new craft had been added to the number of pageant producers since the preceding year and a separate play had to be secured for the added company either by developing a new scene from a former incident, such as Thomas's vision, or by cutting off a part from one of last year's plays, as the York goldsmiths' *Coming of the Three Kings to Herod;* (3) because perhaps a company had tired of presenting the same scene from year to year and wished to add new material to the play, or to substitute an entirely new scene, like the Towneley *First* and *Second Shepherds' Plays,* or, possibly, "the matter of þe castell of emaus" added to the Coventry cappers' roll in 1540; and (4) because change of religious feeling had made certain scenes unacceptable to the public, as when in 1548 at York "certen pagyauntes [were made] excepte, that is to say, the deyng of our lady, the assumption of our lady, and the coronacion of our lady". The supervision of all such alterations and copies of the council register were a part of the pageant-master's preliminary duties in each guild in getting ready for the plays later.

Selection of the Actors. The next move of the pageant-master, after revising the play and copying the individual parts, was to select his actors

and begin rehearsals. At Coventry these players were procured, some of them certainly, from their own guilds; for in 1444 the council decreed that "þer shall no man of the said iiij Craftes [the Cardmakers, Masons, Painters, and Sadlers] play in no pagent on Corpus Christi day save onely in the pagent of his own Crafte, without he have lycens of the maiour þat shal-be for the yer".[69] This would argue as well, however, that the pageant-masters were accustomed to get their men from each other and, in fact, from all sources,—which was true. We hear of both clerks and laymen, professionals and amateurs being chosen for the plays. Some doubtless were actors of exceptional or unusual ability who had come from the neighboring towns for this special festival of the year; for we hear of London players and of at least one from Wakefield being at York in 1446,[70] and no doubt there were other borrowings of especially good actors from neighboring towns. The tendency, however, must have been to choose local players as far as possible in order to restrict the guild expenses to the minimum, a fact which may in a measure account for the apology in "ye Banes or Breife of ye whitson playes in Chester":

By Craftes men & meane men these Pageauntes are played and to Commons and Contrye men acustomablye before. If better men & finer heades now come, what canne be saide?

[69] Harris, *Coventry Leet Book*, i. 206.

[70] Smith, *York Plays*, p. xxxviii.

But of common and contrye playeres take thou the storye.[71]

Care in the Choice of Actors. The plays were indeed given by craftsmen and common workmen and were often necessarily crude, yet the law and the pageant-masters were very careful about procuring as competent men as possible to represent the proper characters; the occasion was too important and too solemn a one to allow any excuses from the players for improper or unskillful acting. Among the expenses of the Chester smiths one finds illustrative notices of money spent in 1567, for instance, "for the chosinge of the little god"; 4*d*. "on the Sonday morninge at hearinge of the Docters and little God"; and 10*d*. "Spent at heringe of the players".[72] Likewise at Newcastle-on-Tyne the company of fullers and dyers spent the comparatively large sums of 10*s*. in 1561 "for the rehersall of the play before ye crafft" and 3*d*. "to a mynstrell yt nyght".[73] And it was ordered at York in 1476 with the full consent and authority of the council "þat yerely in þe tyme of lentyn there shall be called afore the maire for þe tyme beyng iiij of þe moste connyng discrete and able players within this Citie, to serche, here, and examen all þe plaiers and plaies and pagentes thrughoute all þe artificers belonging to Corpus Xti Plaie. And all suche as þay shall fynde sufficiant in personne and

[71] Furnivall, *Digby Plays*, p. xx.
[72] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 305 *n*.
[73] Brand, *History of Newcastle*, p. 371 *n*.

connyng, to þe honour of þe Citie and worship of þe saide Craftes, for to admitte and able; and all oþer insufficiant personnes, either in connyng, voice, or personne to discharge, ammove, and avoide".[74] And at Chester, as an added precaution against careless work, the companies must rehearse before "Mr. Maior" before the appointed day of celebration; then if after all this precaution these actors failed in their parts, the craft that they represented was promptly fined for the shame which its company of players had brought upon the town.—

Rob. Thornskew, aldermannus, monitus est hic xvj die Jun. ad exponendum vjs. viijd. eo quod lusores artis Carpentariorum nesciebant ludum suum die Corporis Christi contra poenam proclamationis communis campanatoris.[75]

Rehearsals. The rehearsals of the pageant-master in 1500 were a most serious, and usually a very thirsty, business. They were regularly and untiringly held from two to five times before the festival, and always a necessary accompaniment of any properly conducted rehearsal was the eating and drinking, with due emphasis on the latter. Some of the general rehearsal expenses for meat and drink are the following from the Chester smiths' accounts:

1561. Payed for the 1st reherse at Jo: Huntington's house, vid; Drink in barkers after the rehearse, xviiid.;

[74] Smith, *York Plays*, p. xxxvii.
[75] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 136.

For beaffe against the generall rehearse, vis. viiid.; 3 ould cheeses, iiiis.; Spent in Sir Rand. Barnes chamber to gett singers, iiid.; Spent at Rob. Jones' at rehearse, xixd.; To Wm. Lutter [minstrell] at generall rehearse, iiiid. ob.; 6 crocks of alle at general rehearse, xs.; a crocke of small ale and 2 gallons, xxd.; A hoppe of wheate to the general rehearse, iis. iiid.: Bread and cakes for general rehearse, iis. viid.; Wine to the said rehearse, iis. viid.; For another hoppe of Wheate agayne the Whyttsontidde, iis. iiid.[76]

The proportion of bread and ale was about the same at Coventry, too, as at Chester. The Coventry smiths' account for 1490 has the following:

Item payd at the Second Reherse in Whyttsonweke in brede Ale & kechyn . . . . ijs iiijd
Inprimis for drynkynge at the pagent in havinge forthe in Wyne & ale . . . . . vijd ob.
Item for ix galons of Ale . . . . . xviijd
Item for a Rybbe of befe & j gose . . . . . vjd
Item for kechyn to denner & sopper . . . ijs ijd
Item for a Rybbe of befe . . . . . iijd
Item for a quarte of wyne . . . . . ijd ob.
Item for an other quarte for heyrynge of procula is gowne . . . . . ijd ob.[77]

Places for the Rehearsals. The pageant-master does not seem to have had any definitely reserved place or hall for holding his rehearsals, but rather to have taken his players through their parts

[76] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 305 *n.*

[77] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 16.

at any place where he could most conveniently get them together. In 1466 the Coventry smiths held one of their rehearsals "in the parke"; in 1576 at "sent marye hall"; in 1579 "in the palys"; and in 1584 "in Seint Nicholas hall". In 1570 the Coventry weavers held "ij rehersys in þe halle", as if referring possibly to their guild-hall. At Chester, as we have seen above, the rehearsals appear to have been held usually at the homes of the players themselves, though at other places as well,—"at Jo: Huntington's house", "in barkers", "at Rob. Jones'", "under St. John's",[78] *etc.*

Other Duties. Nor did the pageant-master's duties end with the selection of the actors and the going through with the rehearsals. He must see to procuring capable singers for his plays, to borrowing or purchasing suitable costumes, to remodeling and repainting last year's pageant-wagon, to "having it out" and guarding it the night before the celebration, to "horsing" it the next day, and to various other details too numerous to mention. These matters are of such a nature, however, that we may best understand them by postponing the discussion of them to the following chapters.

[78] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 305 *n.*

III

THE CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION

Procession and Pageants. The Corpus Christi procession, as we have seen, was first established at the Council of Vienna in 1311, but we have no extant record of the time when the observance of the day was first introduced into England. There is the same uncertainty about the time when the pageants and the plays first became a part of the Corpus Christi ceremonies. Whether the cycles of plays grew up by themselves and were then transferred to Corpus Christi day and thus became more or less attached to the procession, or whether they developed from pageant tableaux and dumb-shows in the annual procession, is not known. Davies thinks it "not improbable that the celebration of the Corpus Christi Festival on its first introduction into this country was accompanied by the exhibition of pageant plays produced by the several companies into which the tradesmen and artisans of cities and towns were then incorporated".[1] But there is a strong probability that the later Corpus

[1] *York Records*, p. 229.

Christi cycles began in the procession as dumb-shows designed by the clergy to impress more forcibly on the people the doctrines of the church, and that as the "bas-relief of living figures counterfeiting a bas-relief of stone" became more and more popular, the earlier Christmas, Easter, and other biblical plays from the church were put into the mouths of the mimetic actors, and the dramas thus developed became the later Corpus Christi cycles. Our records here are unfortunately scrappy, as usual, but what evidence we have seems to bear out this theory.

Hour for Starting the Procession. In the early years of the Corpus Christi festival, when the procession and the plays were all one, the ceremonies of the day seem to have begun at an early hour in the morning. The early beginning was necessary to make it possible to give the whole program in one day, even though a long midsummer one. What the exact hour was in the earliest years of the procession we do not know; but at York in 1415 it was "at the mydhowre betwix iiijth and vth of the cloke in the mornynge"; at Coventry it was after breakfast, whatever time that may have been; at Lincoln in 1518 it was at seven o'clock in the morning; and at Newcastle-on-Tyne the time was the same. The Newcastle ordinance of the "Felleship of Marchaunts" in 1480 is so specific and so exact in its requirements that it is well worth quoting:—

The ackit of the prosescion of Corpus Christe Day. Also it is asentit, accordit, and agreit, by the said Felleship, in affermyng of gwd rewll to be maid and had, the whilk hath lang tym beyn abused emanks thaym, that wppon Corpus Christi Day yerly, in honoryng and worshippyng of the solemp procession, every man of the said Felleship beyng within the franches of this town the said day as it shall fall, shalle apper in the Beer Marcath by vij of clok in the mornyng, but he haff laytyng by infyrmyte, other ells he af speciall licanse by the said Maister of the said Felleship, wppon payn of a fin by the defauters to be paid for every syke defaute, j pond wax to the Felleshep. Also that thair be a rowll mayd of all the names of the same Felleship, for the said procession, and accordyng to that rowll, callyd by the Clark, the lattast mayd burges to go formest in procession, withoutyn any contraryyng, wppon [ɒain] of forfeting wnto the Felleshipp, for every sik defawte, xld. Provyded always that all those of the said Felleship that shalbe Mair, Shereff, and aldermen, with thaire officers and servandes, than beyng, attend wppon the holy sacramente. Provydet also, that all those of the said Felleship that as beyn maires, shereffs, and aldermen, in yerys by passyt, shall go princypall in the sayd solemp procession, accordyng as they war chossen into the sayd officese.[2]

Attendance upon the Procession. Attention should be called here to two things in this ordinance from Newcastle: (1) that attendance upon the procession was by this time, not optional, but required; and (2) that the position of each man in the line was arranged with a nice regard for precedence and etiquette. In the earliest years of the observance

[2] Dendy, *Newcastle Merchant Adventurers*, pp. 4-5.

of the ceremony it may have been that a person's presence in the procession was regarded as an evidence of his acceptance of the dogma of transubstantiation;[3] but by this time, 1480, when the novelty of the ceremony had somewhat worn off, when the medieval love of splendor and show in pageantry had somewhat dimmed the original purpose of the procession, and when men had consequently lost much of their pious interest in the observance of the feast, every master craftsman of every trade was required both by guild and by town ordinance to be present in person at the beginning of the procession. Later, moreover, when the religious interest had still further waned and "the spontaneous expressions of piety" had failed to satisfy the desire for a brilliant procession, not only the master craftsmen, but the journeymen tradesmen, and even the hirelings, were enjoined to be present. And in the last days of the festival strangers were admitted into the procession in many of the towns and hirelings allowed to take one's place, provided the proper livery was worn.

Etiquette in the Procession. In the second place, it is to be noted in the Newcastle ordinance quoted above that the members of each craft were required to march in a strict order of precedence according to seniority, "the lattast mayd burges to go formest in procession". And as among the

[3] Smith, *English Gilds,* p. lxxxv; Davidson, *English Mystery Plays,* p. 92.

craftsmen, so among the guilds, the various companies took rank over each other according to age. The place of honor was that nearest the host, and all the craftsmen were jealous in the extreme of their places, so much so that their order had to be solemnly regulated by the town council. Even the aldermen, however, could not always satisfy their brethren, if we may judge from the frequent repetitions of laws regulating the order of the procession and imposing heavy fines for failure to comply.

A remarkable instance of this failure of the city fathers to satisfy their fellow craftsmen is handed down to us from York in the reign of Henry VII, when a dispute on a point of etiquette in the procession became so serious in the town as to threaten disastrous results. "The contending parties were the Company of Weavers and the Company of Cordwainers; and the important question to be decided was, whether the weavers or the cordwainers were entitled to walk on the right hand in the Corpus Christi procession. The quarrel commenced prior to the accession of Henry VII. and was occasioned by an order of the council requiring the cordwainers, with their fourteen torches, to go on the weavers' left hand. The cordwainers regarded this as a dishonorable position, and were so indignant at the preference shewn to the weavers, that, rather than comply with the order, they refused for several years to take any part at all in the procession."

The authorities of the town, however, finally realized that such a bad example as this could not be allowed to pass unnoticed; so when the cordwainers were again 'rebell and disobeaunt' at Corpus Christi day, 1490, the town council with 'Maister Tresorer of the Cathedral Church of York' assembled together in solemn conference "and fully determined that the penalty of £10 incurred by the cordwainers for their offense, should be paid, 'and all such other punyshment of person of the said cordwainers for non-payment of the same, should be as provided.'" The magnitude of the trouble is shown by the fact that the council further determined to write for advice to the king, to the lord chancellor, to the Earl of Derby, and to any others thought necessary.

This action, however, seems only to have provoked the company of cordwainers "to further resistance, in which they were encouraged by a factious party in the city. A few days afterwards it was reported to the council that Sir Thomas Gribthorpe, a priest, was overheard by another priest to say, that 'there shold be two hundred men that were no shomakers, to tak the part of shomakers, an thai myght gett a furiouse man to set thame apon wark,' and that the said shomakers 'wold spend large money or the Maior and his brethern shold opteigne aganest thame.' Another person heard the same Sir Thomas say, 'that there wold be three or four hundred men not being sowtors,

that wold name thame self sowtors and tak the part with the sowtors, as if thai myght get a capitan to set thame apon werk, they shold strike their adversaries down.' "

For some reason not known to us now the council failed to follow up its threat of punishment that year, and in the latter part of the following February a letter was had from the king's own hand advising the council to continue " the olde usages ". This seems to have settled the question temporarily; for the minutes of 1491 contain no reference to the trouble. But the good behavior of the cordwainers was not of long duration. " On the first of June, 1492, the council deemed it necessary to re-enact their ancient ordinances, by which the members of the corporation, and every gild, fraternity, art and occupation, were required to bear their accustomed number of torches in the procession under the penalties formerly imposed; and they again determined that the cordwainers should walk on the left hand of the weavers. Again the cordwainers were disobedient; and on the 28th of June the council ordered that ' all such forfetts as be forfett for beryng of torchez the morn aftir Corpus Xpi day last past, accordyng to old ordinaunces theruppon provided, shuld be leveed and rased withoute pardon, that is to say, of Roger Appulby, one of the xxiiijti, xls, of William Barker, merchaunt, another of the xxiiijti, xls; and of the artificers of Cordwaners xli, for nown-

beryng of their torchez, accordyng to diverse old ordinaunczez'.

"Having thus asserted their authority, the council showed a disposition to conciliate the parties, and a few days afterwards they recommended the cordwainers to go to the weavers, 'to th'entent that a lovyng communication betwix theym might be had, and uppon such communication had, if the said occupations could be agreed of the premissez, then thay to cume to-fore the maire and his counseil, and gif a awnswere of the said communication wheder thai be agreid or noo, and if thai cannott be agreable emonst tham-selffe, than the maire and the councel for to tak such ordre betwix thame as tham should be most exspedient in that behalve.' After several months had passed, the cordwainers submitted, and the searchers with some of the principal members of the craft appeared personally in the council chamber, and 'ther laye down in a purse ensealed x*li*, whiche they had forfet for nown-beryng of theyr torches the morn after Corpus Xpi day last past, puttyng the said x*li* in the will and discretions of the counseill, besechyng my lord the maier to be theyr good and tendre lord, and al my maisters the aldermen and other of the counseill, good and tendre maisters, and not to take al that mony of theym, haveing in theyr discret and tendre consideration that the cause of their nown-beryng was only in John Crak and John Smyth, two of ther serssors, and not the defaut of

the hole crafft, as they had shewed diverse and mony tymes hertofore.'"

Whether the "good and tendre maisters" took all the cordwainers' ten pounds is not told us, but in the minutes of the following year, May, 1493, it was recorded that the craft of cordwainers 'when the procession were solempnely done the morowe next after Corpus Xpi day, [were] to bere their torches honestly made and lighted, with the craft of the weavers and going of the weavers' left handes, as had been there afore acustomed'.[4]

Development of the Plays. In the earliest processions the lay societies seem usually to have preceded the sacrament, while the clergy followed. Certainly this was the order of the processions at Coventry and Newcastle, though at York the crafts were put last. In this shift of the trades companies from the front to the rear may be seen, it is suggested,[5] one bit of evidence in favor of the growth of the Corpus Christi plays from dumb-show pageants in the procession, since the pageants were usually presented by the craftsmen. Sometime shortly after the confirmation of the Corpus Christi feast in England, it is thought, pageants representing stories from the Bible were introduced by the trades companies, who had so far been present in the procession with their guild banners only. These pageants at first were mimetic

[4] Davies, *York Records*, pp. 250-7.
[5] Davidson, *English Mystery Plays*, p. 93.

merely and seem to have been presented in the procession while moving. In a short time, however, spoken drama, which had already begun in the church, was introduced into the Corpus Christi pageants. But spoken drama could be successfully given only during the halts at the stations, and therefore caused great delay for the clergy and other members of the procession following. In order to avoid this extension of the procession to an unreasonable length of time the plays were transferred from the front of the procession to the rear, a move which soon created a division between the two parts because of the slower progress of the pageants. Yet, because of the inherited custom of following the course of the host, the plays, even after their separation from the procession proper, continued to follow the traditional course. "Such," says Davidson, "seems to be a reasonable interpretation of the facts as presented by the records".[6]

Beverley Mimetic Pageants. Let us look, however, at some of the scattering records which bear out this theory of the growth of the Corpus Christi plays in the procession. One of the earliest is an entry of a mimetic pageant at Beverley in 1355. This record states that "every year, on the feast of the Purification of the blessed Mary, all the bretheren and sisteren [of the Guild of St. Mary] shall meet together in a fit and ap-

[6] *Loc. cit.*, p. 94.

pointed place, away from the church; and there, one of the gild shall be clad in comely fashion as a queen, like to the glorious Virgin Mary, having what may seem a son in her arms; and two others shall be clad like to Joseph and Simeon; and two shall go as angels, carrying a candle-bearer, on which shall be twenty-four thick wax lights. With these and other great lights borne before them, and with much music and gladness, the pageant Virgin with her son, and Joseph and Simeon, shall go in procession to the church. And all the sisteren of the gild shall follow the Virgin; and afterwards all the bretheren; and each of them shall carry a wax light weighing half a pound. And they shall go two and two, slowly pacing to the church; and when they have got there, the pageant Virgin shall offer her son to Simeon at the high altar; and all the sisteren and bretheren shall offer their wax lights, together with a penny each. All this having been solemnly done, they shall go home again with gladness."[7] This, it is to be noted, is a mimetic pageant of the feast of the Purification rather than of Corpus Christi, but it may be taken as resembling very closely similar pageants in the Corpus Christi procession.

Dundee. From Dundee comes also a record of dumb-show pageants. This gives "The Grayth of the Prossession of Corpus Christi, deliverit Sir Thomas Barbour" as follows: "In primis xxiij

[7] Smith, *English Gilds*, pp. 149-50.

of crownis, vij Pair of angel reynis, iij Myteris, Cristi cott of lethyr, with the hosse and gluffis, Cristis hed, xxxj Suerdis, Thre lang corssis of tre, Sanc Thomas Sper, A cors til Sanc Blasis, Sanc Johnnis cott, A credil, & thre barnis maid of cloth, xx Hedis of hayr, The four evangellistis, Sanc Katrinis quheil, Sanc Androwis cros, A saw, a ax, a rassour, a guly knyff, A worm of tre, Sanc Barbill castel, Abraamis hat & thre hedis of hayr."[8]

Dublin. At Dublin, too, in 1478 we hear of a similar series of pageant-tableaux on Corpus Christi day. The record is found in the Chain Book of the city and was apparently entered in 1498:—

The pagentis of Corpus Christi day, made by an olde law and confermed by a semble befor Thomas Collier, Maire of the Citte of Divelin, and Juries, Baliffes and commones, the iiiith Friday next after midsomer, the xiii. yere of the reign of King Henri the VIIth [1498]:

Glovers: Adam and Eve, with an angill followyng berryng a swerde. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Corvisers: Caym and Abell, with an auter and the ofference. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Maryners, Vynters, Shipcarpynderis, and Samountakers: Noe, with his shipp, apparalid acordyng. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Wevers: Abraham [and] Ysack, with ther auter and a lambe and ther offerance. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Smythis, Shermen, Bakers, Sclateris, Cokis and Masonys: Pharo, with his hoste. Peyn, xl.*s.*

[8] Maxwell, *Old Dundee*, p. 562.

Skynners, House-Carpynders, and Tanners, and Browders: for the body of the camell, and Oure Lady and hir chil[d]e well aperelid, with Joseph to lede the camell, and Moyses with the children of Israell, and the Portors to berr the camell. Peyn, xl.*s.* and Steyners and Peyntors to peynte the hede of the camell. [Peyn,] xl.*s.*

[Goldsmy]this: The three kynges of Collynn, ridyng worshupfully, with the offerance, with a sterr afor them. Peyn, xl.*s.*

[Hoopers]: The shep[er]dis, with an Angill syngyng Gloria in excelsis Deo. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Corpus Christi yild: Criste in his Passioun, with three Maries, and angilis berring serges of wex in ther hands. [Peyn,] xl.*s.*

Taylors: Pilate, with his fellaship, and his lady and his knyghtes, well beseyne. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Barbors: An[nas] and Caiphas, well araied acordyng. [Peyn,] xl.*s.*

Courteours: Arthure, with [his] knightes. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Fisshers: The Twelve Apostelis. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Marchauntes: The Prophetis. Peyn, xl.*s.*

Bouchers: tormentours, with ther garmentis well and clenly peynted. [Peyn,] xl.*s.*

The Maire of the Bulring and bachelers of the same: The Nine Worthies ridyng worshupfully, with ther followers accordyng. Peyn, xl.*s.*

The Hagardmen and the husbandmen to berr the dragoun and to repaire the dragoun a Seint Georges day and Corpus Christi day. Peyn, xl.*s.*[9]

Development from the Dumb-Shows. In all of these cases, it is to be noted, the actors were in the procession in character, and it is to be supposed that they conveyed the message of their pageants

[9] Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 363-4.

by action only; *i. e.*, without words, something in the manner of the Canterbury Watch, where the martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket was represented annually in mute drama.[10] That this was the custom at Dublin may be conjectured with some degree of certainty, since, in the case of the hoopers, the one representing the angel was required to sing the *Gloria* during the course of the procession. But whether or not any attempt was made to talk while walking seems impossible to tell; possibly so. But no English record has come down to us, though at Draguignan, France, we learn of such a custom in the Corpus Christi procession:—

> Le dit jeu jora avec la procession comme auparadvant et le plus d'istoeres et plus brieves que puront estre seront et se dira tout en cheminant sans ce que personne du jeu s'areste pour eviter prolixité et confusion tant de ladite prosession que jeu, et que les estrangiers le voient aisement.[11]

Any such attempt to talk, or even to carry on connected pantomimic action, while in motion must necessarily have been accomplished only with great difficulty and must have resulted in the station halts. These halts in turn prolonged the procession too much for some of the members and necessitated the transference of the embryonic cycle of plays to the rear. Yet the mere act of shifting the plays to the rear gave the actors more time for

[10] Compare *Hist. MSS Comm.*, ix. 1, 148.

[11] Petit de Julleville, *Les Mystères*, ii. 209.

their scenes and possibly resulted in developing and perfecting the cycle.

Spirit of the Festival. Of course the author does not claim that either this theory thus advanced or the records cited to support it prove the development of the Corpus Christi cycles from tableaux in the procession, but only that the probability of such an origin is strong. Probably this theory can never be either proved or disproved; for none of our extant records give more than the merest hints as to the growth of the plays. In one year they are unknown; in the next we find them full-fledged dramas and the principal part of the Corpus Christi celebration. For by the time our first records mention the plays in connection with the procession the festival has lost most of its significance as a religious celebration and has become a day for feasting and eating as well as for psalm singing; men have come to seek, not only the thousand days of pardon, but a holiday as well. It is a feast that "shall be held on the festival of Corpus Christi; and, on each day of the feast, they shall have three flagons, and four or six tankards; and ale shall be given to the poor; and prayers shall be said over the flagons".[12] And "every householder that dwellith in the hye way ther as the procession procedith, shall hang before ther doores and forefrontes beddes and coverynges of beddes of the best that thay can gytt, and strewe

[12] Records of the Tiler's Gild, Lincoln, in Smith's *English Gilds*, p. 184.

before ther doores resshes and other suche flowers and strewing as they thynke honeste and clenly for the honour of Godd and worship of this citie ".[13]

Separation of the Plays from the Procession. Such regulations as these imply that the festal spirit was uppermost; and it was this holiday spirit that caused the final separation of procession and plays. Already, no doubt, a division had arisen between the two sections of the procession because of the slower progress of the pageants, but it remained for the secular element to effect the complete separation; for as the festival grew in importance and the holiday spirit began to prevail, there gradually developed a wider and wider divergence between the purely spiritual and the secular elements in the celebration. The result was that the plays and the procession had to be separated entirely. At Newcastle-on-Tyne the procession took place in the morning and the plays were given in the afternoon. At Beverley they were both on the same day, but apparently at different times. At Chester the procession was at the regular Corpus Christi feast, the plays at Whitsuntide. And at York, where we have our fullest accounts of the clash between procession and plays, the former had to be postponed until the day after Corpus Christi on account of the " revellings, drunkenness, clamour, singing, and other improprieties " which caused the people to lose " the

[13] Davies, *York Records*, p. 247 *n.*

benefit of the indulgences graciously conceded by Pope Urban IV. to those who duly attended the religious services appointed by the canons ".[14]

Order of the Procession. To return, however, to the procession proper: The line was formed, as we have seen above, at an early hour in the morning, the time varying in the different towns. Each man had his individual position in the procession assigned according to his rank. In the earliest days the craftsmen led the procession and the ecclesiastics followed, but later this order was reversed. After this change in the early order, we are told of the procession at York that a boy usually led the line, bearing in his hands a great cross. He was dressed "al in Whyte" and was followed immediately by the town clergy in white surplices. The ecclesiastics were followed in turn by the master of the Corpus Christi guild, who was supported on each side by a former guild-master and was followed by the six wardens of the guild, each carrying a white wand and wearing a silken stole around his neck. Next came the costly shrine, or pyx, of the Corpus Christi guild, which, with all its contents, was valued in 1547 at £210 18*s.* 2*d.*

The Shrine. This shrine, probably one of the most attractive features of the procession, was a gift to the guild in 1449 from the Bishop of Hereford. It acquired its wealth from the donations of

[14] Davies, *York Records*, p. 243.

pious members of the guild and the parish. Of this shrine the following minute description was given in 1547 when it came to be sold:

First, the said shryne is all gilte, havyng 6 ymages gylded, with an ymage of the birthe of our Lord, of mother of perle, sylver and gylt, and 33 small ymages ennamyled stondyng aboute same, and a tablett of golde; 2 golde rynges, one with a safure, and the other with a perle, and 8 other little ymages, and a great tablett of golde havyng in yt the ymage of our Lady, of mother of perle; which shryne conteyneth in lenght 3 quarters of a yerd and a nayle, and in brede a quarter di. and more, and in height di. yerd, over and besides the steple stondyng upon the same. . . .

The said steple havyng a whether cokke thereuppon, all gylte, and a ryall of golde, 4 olde nobles, 2 gylted grootes hangyng upon the said steple, and also beyng within the same steple a berall, wheryn the sacrament is borne, havyng in the said berall 2 ymages or angells of sylver and gylt, beryng up the said sacrament, the foote and coveryng of whiche saide berall is sylver and gylte, weyng togeder, with the golde and berall, besides the said shryne, 181 onzes. . . .

A sylver bell hangyng in the said steple, weyng 3 onzes and di.[15]

This shrine was borne by two of the guild-wardens, two others of whom kept the crowd in order. At Coventry it was sheltered with "A canope of silk brodured with gold with ij sidez of the same" carried by "iiij burgesses". At Coven-

[15] Skaife, *Guild of the Corpus Christi, York*, pp. 296-7.

try, too, six children were paid by the St. Nicholas and Corpus Christi guilds one year "for beryng vj torches by the Sacrament" and four men were employed "to bere the iiij gret torches".[16] Then came the choristers in white surplices, chanting the services assigned for the day.

City Officials. After the host came on horseback the Lord Mayor, who at Coventry wore "a Crown of sylver & gyld". "Mr. Maior" was followed by the aldermen and other city officers, "too and too together", all fittingly arrayed in their most splendid ceremonial robes and bearing their required number of wax torches. In 1572 the splendor of the pageantry was increased by an order for the sheriffs "to ryde with harnessed men accordyng to the ancient custome, and every alderman to fynde sex men, wherof iiij to be in white armour, and ij in coates of plate, and every of the xxiiijor to fynd iiij men, wherof ij to be in white armour, and ij with calevers, towerds the said rydyng".[17]

Craftsmen. The city officials were succeeded by the craftsmen, who, as stated above, took their places according to a legally prescribed order of precedence, which, by the time our earliest extant records reach us, seems to have been fixed according to the date of the guild formation. At Beverley the order was as follows:

[16] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 162.
[17] Davies, *York Records*, pp. 269-70.

In primis	the xij Governors.	Item, Alderman of	Wevers
Item, Alderman of	Merchants	"	Walkers
"	Drapers	"	Glovers
"	Bowchers	"	Bowers
"	Baxters	"	Cowpers
"	Wryghts		and
"	Smyths		Fletchers
"	Taylors	"	Wattermen
"	Tylers	"	Potters
"	Shomakers	"	Barbors
"	Lyttsters	"	Cappers
"	Barkers		and
			Hatters
		"	Sadyllers.[18]

It is noticeable here that only the aldermen of the guilds were allowed in the procession and that the merchants' alderman came first in the line. At Coventry, however, where the laity preceded the shrine, we find the order reversed and the mercers, the oldest company in that city too, coming last:—

Pur le Ridyng on Corpus Christi day and for Watche on Midsomer even.

The furst craft. ffyshers and Cokes. Baxsters and Milners. Bochers. Whittawers and Glouers. Pynners, Tylers and Wrightes. Skynners. Barkers. Coruisers. Smythes. Weuers. Wirdrawers. Cardmakers, Sadelers, Peyntours and Mason[s]. Gurdelers. Taylours, Walkers and Sherman. Deysters. Drapers. Mercers.[19]

At Coventry the tradesmen followed their torches, the bearers of which wore white surplices. Here, as everywhere else, the craftsmen were dressed in their guild livery; and it is suggested by Mr. A. F. Leach [20] that the origin of such liveries, which were compulsory—as, for that matter, were the

[18] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 69.
[19] Harris, *Coventry Leet Book*, p. 220.
[20] *Beverley Town Documents*, p. lviii.

banners and torches which the craftsmen carried,—may perhaps have been connected with these religious functions.

Players in the Procession. Along with each company of craftsmen, of course, went their pageants and their actors, both of whom continued to hold their accustomed places in the rear of the procession even after the complete separation of the plays and their postponement to other dates. Indeed, this preliminary parade of the players and the pageant-cars in later times seems to have served often as an advance advertisement of what was to be found in the plays of the afternoon, or the next day, or the following Whitson week. At Lincoln in 1515 the players not only were required to go in character in the procession, but constables were stationed "to wait upon the array in procession, both to keep the people from the array, and also to take heed of such as wear garments in the same".[21] At Coventry, too, though the pageant-wagons do not seem to have passed in procession, the actors themselves were present. Herod was there on horseback and in painted garments. Mary, "Katryne & Margaret", and "viij virgyns" were represented; Gabriel was paid 4*d.* for "beryng the lilly"; and James, Thomas of India, and "x other apostells" were paid for bearing torches.[22] And the great gilded pageant-wagons

[21] *Hist. MSS Comm.*, xiv. 8, 25.
[22] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, pp. 162 ff.

enriched the procession with their flags, garlands, and banners. But these are of so much importance to the present study that it will be necessary to take them up separately in the next chapter.

IV

THE PAGEANTS

The Pageant-Wagon. The general appearance and characteristic features of the Corpus Christi pageant-cars have been familiar for scores of years through the accounts of Dugdale, Rogers, and others. Perhaps the best description is that of Rogers, who says of the Whitsun plays at Chester that they were presented on "a high scaffolde with two rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon four wheeles [in another MS. six wheeles]. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, beinge all open on the tope, that all behoulders might heare and see them. The places where they played them was in every streete. They begane first at the abay gates, and when the firste pagiante was played, it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the maior, and so to every streete [*i. e.*, the four principal streets, the order being 1st Watergate, 2nd Bridge Street], and soe every streete had a pagiante playinge before them at one time, till all the pagiantes for the day

appointed weare played. And when one pagiant was neere ended, worde was broughte from streete to streete, that soe they mighte come in place thereof, exceedinge orderlye, and all the streetes have theire pagiantes afore them all at one time playeinge together; to see which playes was greate resorte, and also scafoldes and stages made in those places where they determined to playe theire pagiantes."[1]

Dugdale's Statement. Dugdale, too, says of the plays at Coventry: "Before the suppression of the monasteries, this city of Coventry was very famous for the pageants that were played therein upon Corpus Christi day, which occasioning very great confluence of people to it from far and near, were of no small benefit thereto; which pageants being acted with mighty state and reverence by the friers of this house, had theatres for the several scenes, very large and high, placed upon wheeles, and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city, for the better advantage of the spectators".[2]

Strutt's Description. Strutt, however, in his *Manners and Customs* (1776) gives a very different description of these stages. "In the early dawn of literature", says he, "and when the sacred mysteries were the only theatrical performances, what is now called the stage did then consist of three several platforms, or stages raised one

[1] Quoted in Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, pp. 303-4.
[2] Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vi. 3, 1534.

above another; on the uppermost sat the *pater coelestis,* surrounded with his angels; on the second appeared the holy saints and glorified men; and the last and lowest was occupied by mere men, who had not yet passed from this transitory life to the regions of eternity. On one side of this lowest platform was the resemblance of a dark pitchy cavern, from whence issued appearance of fire and flames; and when it was necessary, the audience were treated with hideous yellings and noises, as imitative of the howlings and cries of the wretched souls tormented by the relentless dæmons. From this yawning cave the devils themselves constantly ascended, to delight and to instruct the spectators; to delight, because they were usually the greatest jesters and buffoons that then appeared; and to instruct, for that they treated the wretched mortals who were delivered to them with the utmost cruelty, warning thereby all men carefully to avoid the falling into the clutches of such hardened and remorseless spirits.—But in the more improved state of the theatre, and when regular plays were introduced, all this mummery was abolished, and the whole cavern and devils, together with the highest platform before mentioned, entirely taken away, two platforms only then remaining; and these continued a considerable time in use, the upper stage serving them for chambers, or any elevated situations."[3] This description has

[3] iii. 130.

been thought to refer to the Corpus Christi stage; but since Strutt gives no authority for his statement of the three platforms, and since such a stage would not conform to "the varied subjects of the Corpus Christi plays", Sharp long ago conjectured,[4] and rightly, too, that Strutt must have had reference to a fixed stage such as was customarily used for the French Passion plays.[5]

Thus, one may readily see, we are dependent for our direct information about the Corpus Christi stage on the brief statements of Rogers and Dugdale. The modern student who wants specific information, however, finds these descriptions defective. From them he learns only that the pageant-wagon was movable, that it was placed on four, or six, wheels, that it was composed of two stories, the lower of which was used for dressing, the upper for acting, and that it was very large and high. Further inferences can not be drawn from these descriptions, and any more detailed information must be obtained from indirect sources.

Other Sources of Information. Fortunately,

[4] *Coventry Mysteries,* p. 24.

[5] Compare the colored drawing of the stage used for playing the *Passion* at Valenciennes in 1547, printed in Petit de Julleville's *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature francaise,* ii. 416. Similarly, M. Jusserand has reproduced in the Furnivall *Miscellany,* pp. 192 and 194, two miniatures of what he regards, or once regarded, as Corpus Christi stages of the fourteenth century, but Professor Manly has pointed out that these are probably no more than pictures of puppet-booths. *Cf. Nation,* lxxiv. p. 465.

from the extant remnants of old guild accounts and town records and from the MSS of the play-cycles that have come down to modern times, materials can be collected piecemeal and then assembled, so as to furnish us with a fairly definite idea of the construction and appearance of a Corpus Christi pageant.

Norwich Grocers' Pageant. One source full of such details is the "Inventory of ye p'ticulars appartaynyng to ye Company of ye Grocers" found among some extracts made in the eighteenth century from the books of the Norwich grocers' company. From this inventory we learn that their pageant-car was "a Howse of Waynskott, paynted and buylded on a Carte, with fowre whelys", that it had a "square topp to sett over ye sayde Howse", "A Gryffon, gylte, with a fane to sette on ye sayde toppe", "A bygger Iron fane to sett on ye ende of ye Pageante", "iiij^{xx} iij small Fanes" encircling the top, and "3 paynted clothes to hang abowte ye Pageant". We learn also that the stage of this pageant contained a tree, possibly the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, to which flowers were bound with "collerd thryd" and which was laden with "orenges, fyges, allmondes, dates, Reysens, preumes, & apples".[6]

To this somewhat indefinite, generalized description of the Norwich grocers' pageant-car it may be

[6] Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, p. xxxii and *n.*; Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 388.

added that the wagon contained double stages, both of which were used for acting—the upper representing heaven, the lower paradise and the earth,—and that the paradise platform was raised a step or so above that of the earth.[7] Other stages, we find, customarily had one or more of these individual raised platforms, called *sedes, locus,* or *domus,* which were separate, elevated stages set on the regular pageant stage and used to represent special towns, houses, or temples.[8] All these stages were covered with rushes, and, if we may judge from the Coventry cappers' pageant-car,[9] ledges were put around the outside of the main stages to keep the actors from accidentally stepping off.

Hell-mouth. Perhaps at this point, in connection with the stages of the processional pageant, the famous medieval hell-mouth ought to be mentioned. Hell, to the medieval type of mind, was a fearful thing, and in the religious plays of the Corpus Christi class the authors are fond of representing it as often and in as awful a way as possible, perhaps as a judicious warning of the wrath to come.

Mr. V. E. Albright in a neatly drawn, imaginary picture of the *Mary Magdalene* stage[10] has portrayed the hell *sedes* in that play as a plain, ordinary, covered platform with two devils on the

[7] *Cf.* Chapter V.
[8] *Cf.* Chapter V.
[9] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries,* p. 47.
[10] *The Shaksperian Stage,* p. 16.

boards and several other demons peeping out from curtains beneath the stage. This misconception of the scene would seem to have had as its basis a misunderstanding of the stage-direction after line 357 of the play: "Here xal entyr þe prynse of dylles In a stage, and Helle ondyr-neth þat stage".[11] Mr. Albright may be right in his general conception of the staging of the *Mary Magdalene* play—in fact, he probably is correct,—but all the weight of existing evidence is against the probability of such a hell-stage as he has pictured.

Perhaps we can best visualize the hell of the Corpus Christi stage by considering several scenes in which it was presented—scenes, too, which show how the dramatists of that day were themselves lacking in a definite conception of hell-mouth. For example, the writer of the Chester plays makes the devil in the drapers' *Creation and Fall* "Come vp ovt of a hole" to tempt Adam and Eve, thus suggesting the conventional dragon's-mouth entrance; and yet in the cook's *Harrowing of Hell* later in the same cycle Christ speaks of the entrance to hell as if it were a pair of gates. In the latter pageant, which contains one of the scenes where the method of presenting hell-mouth is most difficult to explain, the play is prefaced with a stage-direction that *primo fiat lux in inferno materialis aliqua subtilitate machinata.* Because of this light, commotion is immediately raised among the inhabitants

[11] Furnivall, *Digby Plays,* p. 67.

on the inside, Adam, Isaiah, David, John the Baptist, and the rest, all of whom offer various suggestions as to what the light means. Then follows:—

Tunc . . . dicat Jesus, Attolite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini porte eternales, et introibit rex glorie.

JESUS.

Open up hell gates anon,
You princes of pyne everye eichone,
That Godes sonne maie in gone,
And the kinge of blesse.

And if we should wish to complicate still further the method of representing hell-mouth on the Corpus Christi stage, we might add the speeches of Christ and Belial in the York saddlers' *Harrowing of Hell*:—

Jesus. Attolite portas principes,
·Oppen vppe ȝe princes of paynes sere,
Et eleuamini eternales,
Youre yendles ȝatis þat ȝe haue here.
. . . . .
Belliall. We! spere oure ȝates, all ill mot þou spede,
And sette furthe watches on þe wall.—
ll. 121-40.

These speeches and directions, if taken by themselves, would imply hells with battlemented walls and with gates for entrances—in fact, little more than a conventional reproduction of the picture implied in a part of the twenty-fourth Psalm. And yet we have seen that the author, or authors, of the Chester plays speaks of hell-mouth earlier in the cycle as a hole from which the devil shall enter paradise. It is also known that the almost universal medieval conception of hell-mouth, for some reason, was that of a dragon's head with wide-gaping jaws, long, sharp, exaggerated teeth, and gleaming eyes. How, then, were hell-mouth and the gates and battlements of hell represented in the York and Chester plays?

The answer to this somewhat vexing problem is to be found in a hypothetical composite of two pictures printed by Sharp in his famous *Dissertation*.[12] In one of these the artist, if we may call him such, has represented hell-mouth as a great dragon's gaping jaws, between which is set a door, or gate, which an angel is unlocking. And inside are discernible various men, women, devils, priests, kings, and other unfortunates.

A mere glance at this reprint shows that such a hell-mouth as the one depicted here might well

[12] Plates 5 and 6, opposite p. 62. One of these is a copy of an eleventh century drawing in the Cotton library of the British Museum, the other an engraving from a fresco painting over the arch which separates the nave and chancel in the Chapel of the Holy Cross at Stratford-on-Avon.

have served as the hell-gates of the Chester plays, and, had the entire picture with all its surrounding walls been given us, it might possibly have furnished the battlements demanded by the York *Harrowing of Hell*. The only thing lacking is the wall about the dragon's mouth, which is just the feature given in the other picture. In this we have a view chiefly of the exterior of hell (though we are allowed to get a glimpse through one of the walls into the depths of the place). Hell as represented here is a walled and battlemented furnace filled with flame and entered through the jaws of a big-eyed, yawning dragon. On the walls are two demons blowing horns, one sitting, the other leaning over, and inside the place of torment are seen Envy, Gluttony, and one other, all of whom a devil is chastising with a rope scourge. Wrath and three others are just walking into the jaws of hell; a demon off to the right is bringing in Pride on his shoulders; one to the left, with a pitchfork in his hand, is dragging a man by the left leg; while immediately in front another devil is dragging by a chain Avarice and his companions, who are being driven from behind by a bigger devil with an enormous club. In the background is still another horned, long-tailed, and crooked-snouted demon carrying a pitch-fork.[13]

[13] Beneath this picture as given by Sharp is another representing an interior view of hell. This, however, shows nothing of the exterior nor of the mode of entrance and is of no service here.

From these two engravings one may understand how the York and Chester plays might easily have been staged with walls and gates and the conventional dragon's head. The important thing to note, however, is that the hell-head was probably there. It is to be found in both of the pictures; it is referred to in the earlier Chester scene; and we know that it was the accepted symbol of a hell-scene. Sharp prints two other hell-pictures, both of which show the customary gaping dragon's head, and he takes it as the regularly recognized symbol of hell on the stage.

The representation of walls along with the dragon's head was of course common in the pictures of this time, but it is not therefore necessarily to be argued that the gates were always, or indeed often, set between the jaws. In fact the illustration given by Sharp is the only one the present writer has found which puts the gates into the conventional, medieval hell-mouth. This picture seems to represent an attempt to reconcile the common conception of hell-mouth with the passage in Psalm xxiv. But numerous other examples of the representation of hell-mouth as a dragon's head are at hand. In the beautiful colored drawing of the stage used for playing the *Passion* at Valenciennes in 1547 hell-mouth was a dragon's head with red, cavernous jaws and green eyes.[14] The miserere in Ludlow church, England, represents a

[14] *Cf.* Petit de Julleville, *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature francaise,* ii. 416.

demon carrying off a fraudulent ale-wife with her gay head-dress and false measure toward hell-mouth, which is a dragon's gaping, long-toothed jaws.[15] At Lincoln among the list of appurtenances and properties for the play of the "storye of Tobias in the Old Testament" in 1564 there is recorded "First, hell mouth, with a neither chap",[16] as if the mouth were made to open and shut. In the Coventry drapers' accounts for 1537, 1538, 1542, 1554, 1556, 1565, and 1567 items are found "for payntyng & makyng newe hell hede", "for mendyng of hell hede", "for kepynge hell hede", and "for makyng hell mowth and cloth for hyt".[17] In 1557 the Coventry drapers paid 4*d*. "for kepyng of fyer at hell mothe".[18] On one occasion at Coventry hell itself caught fire and almost burnt up.[19] And in Sackville's *Induction* to the *Mirrour for Magistrates* we find a description of hell so closely resembling the hell-mouth of the stage that one might almost say the author of the poem was describing some Corpus Christi play he had seen:

> An hideous hole, all vaste, withouten shape,
> Of endles depth, orewhelmde with ragged stone,
> With ougly mouth, and griesly iawes doth gape,
> And to our sight confounds it selfe in one.[20]

[15] Booklover's Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, p. 126; Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 314 *n*.
[16] *Hist. MSS Comm., Lincoln MSS*, p. 58.
[17] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 61.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[19] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 315.
[20] Haslewood, *Mirror for Magistrates*, ii. l. 317.

Size of the Pageant-Car. Of the actual size of the Corpus Christi pageant-cars, and hence of the stages, very little is known. Dugdale describes the wagons as large and high; and the fact that they were sometimes placed on six wheels would indicate pageants of considerable size. The fact that they were sometimes placed on four wheels would also indicate that they were not all of the same size. At Coventry in 1435 there is a record that "a parcel of land in Mill Lane, adjoining the 'Tailour paiont' [house] being 30½ feet wide and 70½ long, was granted and let for 80 years to John Hampton and 7 others, paying 3s. 8d. rent, and covenanting to erect thereupon during that term 'unam domum vocatum a Paiont hows', and to keep the same in good repair during the said term".[21] From this entry some vague idea of the size of one of these wagons might be gained, were it not for the fact that, as we shall see later, more than one pageant was often stored in the same house. On such a plot of ground, at any rate, a pageant-house might be built big enough to contain a very large wagon.

Gaudy Decorations. As may readily be surmised from the extravagant tastes of the pageant-loving medievalists, as well as from the description of the Norwich grocers' pageant given above, all the play-wagons were gaily and profusely, even gaudily, ornamented. As an example may be cited

[21] Weavers' Pageant of the *Presentation in the Temple*, p. 25.

the Chester mercers, whose pageant-wagon presenting Christ in the manger ought to have been a simple one; yet theirs was most gorgeously decorated:—

> The mercers worshipfull of degre
> The presentation that have yee
> . . . .
> Of caryage I have no doubt
> Both within and without
> It shall be deckyd y^{t} all the Rowte
> Full gladly on it shall be to loke.
> With sundry cullors it shall glime
> Of velvit satten and damaske fine
> Taffyta sersnett of poppyngee grene.[22]

The Chester wrights, in like manner, furnished a "well decked carriage", and the "Drawers of Dee" had their ship painted round with beasts and fowls of all kinds to represent, or symbolize, the "two of a kind" taken into the ark. In time these decorations came to be required, so that by 1520 we find the town council of Beverley fining the alderman of the drapers "because his pageant was not covered with decent dresses".[23] The stage floors were always covered with rushes, and and somewhere on the wagon was hung a banner bearing the arms of the city. At York the regulation about the banners was so strict that the companies were forbidden to place *aliqua signa, arma,*

[22] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 307.
[23] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 172.

vel insignia super paginam predictam nisi tantum arma cujus hon. civitatis.[24] These decorations seem usually to have been provided under the general supervision of the pageant-master, except at Coventry, where there was a decorator, or "dresser", who was regularly paid "for swepyng the pagent & dressyng".[25]

Cost of a Pageant. The cost of a pageant-car and the general expenses for the production of a play have been found at various times in the account books of the guilds. *7s. 7d.* was paid by the Coventry drapers in 1520 for the timber to make their pageant for the *Doomsday* play, and the total cost of a new ship for the Hull *Noah's Ark* play[26] was £5 8*s.* 4*d.* in 1421 and £5 8*s.* in 1494. The Chester smiths, however, paid something less than half this amount in 1561 for their carriage for the scene of the *Purification of Mary*. The full entry is as follows:

1561. Tymber (for the Carriage), 8/4; to carter and men to get it out, 7d. ob.; Wod to make welles, 3/4; Cartwright making the wheles, 7/4; Bords and other tymber, 5/–; The wright making the Carriage and for berrage [drink-money] 8/5, nayls 6d.; Wrightes setting the wheles, viiid.; A pound of grey sope for the wheles, iiid.; Nayles to dresse the Carriage, iiid. ob.; Makyng a fayre paynting and dressynge the pillers gere and a

[24] Smith, *York Plays*, p. xxv *n.*

[25] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, pp. 21 and 48.

[26] This was probably not a regular Corpus Christi play, but from the entry one may gather something of the cost of a pageant-wagon.

crowne for Mary; 3 Curten cowerds [cords], iiid.; pynnes, iiid.[27]

Cost of the Production of a Play. But the expense of the pageant-car was not annual, as was that of the production of the play. A pageant-wagon might with judicious repairs be made to last indefinitely, but the cost of a play was an annual burden, which, however, varied with the different guilds and in different years. The cause of this variation is not hard to find when we come to examine the plays and the circumstances under which they were produced. For example, a simple scene like the York plasterers' *Creation to the Fifth Day* with only one character and one short scene, or the wine-drawers' *Appearance to Mary Magdalene* with two characters, could not be expected, other things being equal, to cost nearly as much as, for example, the mercers' *Doomsday* with thirteen characters, or the goldsmiths' *Adoration* with ten persons and two scenes. There were also natural economic changes in the prices of materials; and some years, of course, more properties were to be bought and more repairs to be made on the carriages. Thus the charges for performing the Coventry drapers' play, Sharp tells us,[28] varied from 21*s.* to £4 8*s.* 6*d.*; and from the same source we learn that the annual costs of the cappers' pageant was about 35*s.* until 1550, and be-

[27] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 305 *n.*

[28] *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 68.

tween 45*s.* and 50*s.* afterwards. In 1490 the total cost of the smiths' pageant was £2 14*s.* 9½*d.*[29] In 1534, the first time the cappers produced their recently acquired play, 31*s.* 5½*d.* was spent in 'Reparacions made of the Pageant & players ger' and 30*s.* 4*d.* for rehearsals and the regular expenses on Corpus Christi day.[30] In 1523 the weavers spent 27*s.* 8½*d.* on their play and 30*s.* 8½*d.* in 1524.[31] And as an example of the usual charges the following from the weavers' records for 1565 may be examined:

In primis for ij rehersys	ijs
Item payd for the dryving of the pagente	vd
Item paid to Symeon	iijs iiijd
Item paid to Josephe	ijs iiijd
Item paid to Jesus	xxd
Item paid to Mary	xxd
Item paid to Anne	xxd
Item paid to Symeon's clarke	xxd
Item paid to the ij angells	viijd
Item paid to the chylde	iiijd
Item paid for russhes, packthryd & nayls	iiijd
Item paid to James Hewete for his rygoles	xxd
Item paid for syngyng	xvjd
Item paid for gloves	ijs ijd
Item paid for meate in the bocherye	xs ixd
Item paid for bread & ale	vijs viijd

Summe xliiijs iijd.[32]

[29] Sharp, pp. 15-17. But note that the sum as given in Sharp is not correctly added. Chambers, *Med. Stage*, ii. 116, incorrectly puts the sum at £3 7*s.* 5½*d.*

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[31] *Presentation in the Temple*, p. 19.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Pageant-Houses. Another thing that added to the annual expenses of the play-producing companies was the yearly charge for the storage of the pageant-wagons. Many of the guilds, of course, owned their own houses, known as pageant-houses, where they stored their pageant-cars. Others, however, rented space for their pageants. At York in 1503, for instance, the cooks were granted "sufficient and convenient roome for theyr pagiaunt within the pagiaunt house of the baxters",[33] and at Lincoln all the wagons were stored in "the late school-house" and a charge made "for warehousing of 4*d.* for every pageant, 'and Noy schippe 12*d.*'"[34]

Often, however, each guild, or each union of two or more guilds, had its own pageant-house, which was built and maintained at the expense of the company. Our fullest accounts of a pageant-house are to be had from the records of the Coventry weavers, who in 1587 tore down their old house and built a new one on its site. The following records of "paymentes for bulding of the paygente house in the Myl lane" will give us some idea of what it was:

Item in prymis, payd at takinge doune of the house and the tilles, for hieryng of a rope, and caryinge the leade to the store house, & for drynk to the worke men that same day . ijs xd

[33] Davies, *York Records*, p. 240 *n.*

[34] Leach in Furnivall *Miscellany*, p. 224. Mr. Leach puts this date at "Nov. 12, 31 Henry VII." (!)

Item payd to carpteners for ther wages . iijli iiijs iiijd
Item payd to the masones for ther wages . viijs iiijd
Item payd to the tilers for tiling and daubing xvijs viijd
Item payd for stone and for carying of stone . . xijs
Item payd for sand and claye . . . . . vs ijd
Item payd for lyme and for heare, to make mortar
. . . . . ixs viijd
Tiles 9s. 6d., timber 30 [25]s. 8d., spars and stoods 11s. 8d.
Item payd for a hundred & halfe of bryckes . ijs ijd
Item payd at the rearyng of the house and on the nyght befor . . . . . xs vjd
Summe is xjli xvijs xd.[35]

To these 1587 entries may be added an earlier one, 1531, that of a payment "for mendyng of þe [old] pagent howse wyndo".

From these accounts we learn that the earlier house had a window, that the later one had a tile roof and probably a stone foundation, that it was possibly sealed inside, and that the total cost was £11 17*s.* 10*d.* But since Sharp tells us (without giving his authority, however) that the new one was also "suitable for a dwelling", it is not possible to state just what or how many of these characteristics were to be found in a regular pageant-house.

Joint Use of the Pageants. The carriage-houses, as stated above, were often the joint property of two or more guilds, as were the pageants stored in them. This joint ownership, of course,

[35] Weavers' Pageant of the *Presentation in the Temple*, p. 26.

was for the purpose of lessening expenses, and in such cases the same wagon was used for more than one play in the same festival. For example, at Chester in 1532 we find the vintners and dyers, who played the *Adoration of the Magi,* the next to the last play on Monday, agreeing with the goldsmiths and masons, who produced the *Slaughter of the Innocents,* the first one on Tuesday, for both to use the same pageant-car, the vintners and dyers to pay a stated amount toward the cost of the wagon and a third of the expenses for repairs and carriage-house rent.

Preliminary Preparations. It was from these pageant-houses that the wagons at the beginning of the festival season were "had furthe" for "reparellynge", "for payntyng of the vane", for "making the wheles", for "dressynge with resshes", for lubrication with "grey sope", and for the general preliminary preparations, all of which must be completed by the evening before the festival. And in order to get an early start the next morning the carriages were removed from their pageant-houses the evening before, and watchmen, usually the journeymen of the guilds, were stationed and paid to protect them from vandals during the night.

"Horsing" the Pageants. The cars were drawn sometimes by men, sometimes by horses. The Norwich grocers' pageant in 1565 was drawn by six horses decorated with "Horsse Clothes,

stayned, w^t^ knopps & tassels ".[36] The Coventry weavers paid their journeymen 3*s.* 2*d.* in 1555 " for dryving the pagent ", and Chambers states that the cappers expected their journeymen to do the " horsing " of their pageant, a service which they do not always seems to have rendered, since Sharp quotes the company as paying 16*d.* one year " for four whit harnesse ".[37] In 1584 the York bakers paid 2*s.* " to vj*d.* laborers for puttinge the padgion "; the Chester smiths had theirs drawn by ten in 1567 and by nine in 1575; the Coventry drapers had ten in 1561; and the cappers in 1490, twelve.

Promptness. The wagons were drawn in a regular stated order and absolute promptness was demanded. At York a schedule of the pageants had to be written by the town-clerk and officially delivered to the crafts yearly in the first or second week of Lent so that no excusable mistake might be made. And, in addition, the bailiffs and the councilmen assumed the government and general oversight over the pageants on play-day so that word might be " broughte how euery place was neere done " and no time be given " to tarye, till y^e^ last was played ". In 1423 " the Twelve Keepers " of Beverley were given their expenses for work " on Corpus Christi day governing all the pageants passing through the whole town ", and in 1459 one Thomas Law, alderman of butchers in the same

[36] Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 388.
[37] *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 49.

town, was fined for coming late to the station at the North Gates.

Number of the Plays. The number of pageants varied, of course, in proportion to the number of plays, from less than a half-dozen scenes at Worcester to as many as fifty-seven at York. This variation in the number of the cars and the pageant scenes furnishes a striking testimony to the elasticity of the plays, which could be divided from or merged into each other according to the changing conditions of social life and the varying wealth and prosperity of the guilds enjoying the feast. At Worcester in 1467 the town-council ordained "that v. pageunts be hadd amonge the craftes"[38] that year, an ordinance which would suggest that the number of scenes varied from year to year. At Beverley there were thirty-eight in 1390 against thirty-six in 1520; thirty-two are extant from Wakefield, and there probably were others; and Coventry probably had forty-five, or nine, according as the count is made[39] (none of which, it is rather remarkable, presented any scenes from the Old Testament).

Time Required. The length of time required for the plays varied from one day, the time at most of the towns, to three days at Chester. At York the whole cycle of from forty-eight to fifty-seven scenes was gone through within one day, though, in order to accomplish this, the actors had to be ready

[38] Smith, *English Gilds*, p. 372.
[39] Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, p. xv.

for beginning "at the mydhowre betwix iiijth and vth of the cloke in the mornynge". At Coventry, too, the whole series was meant for completion in one day; but this was not always accomplished, for in 1457 we learn that on "Corporis Christi yeven at nyght . . . came the quene [Margaret] from Kelyngworth to Coventre . . . to se the play there on the morowe; and she sygh then alle the Pagentes pleyde save Domes-day, which myght not be pleyde for lak of day".[40] In such cases it appears that the remaining scenes were given the following day; for in 1544 among the entries of the Coventry cappers, whose scene was third from the last, we find 8*d*. "payd for drynk in þe pageant for þe plears for bothe days", from which one might surmise that the whole series was not completed the first day, as the program called for, and that the last three acts were left for the second. At other places, however, the pageants were purposely distributed over several days; as, for example, at Chester, where they "were played vpon monday, tuseday, and wenseday in witson weeke".

ffor three dayes together, begynninge one mondaye,
see these pagentes played to the beste of theire skill,
wher to supply all wantes, shalbe noe wantes of good will.[41]

Summary. In conclusion, then, it may be said of the pageant-cars on which the Corpus Christi plays were presented that they were big, ponderous wagons employing one or two stages.

[40] Harris, *Coventry Leet Book*, p. 300.
[41] Deimling, *Chester Plays*, i. p. 3.

When the plays were simple in scene, only one stage was used. In such cases a lower room, protected by curtains, was sometimes fitted up under the stage for a dressing-room. When the plays demanded the representation of heaven and earth, or of heaven and paradise, double stages, one above the other, were used, the upper representing heaven, the lower earth or paradise. On the stages were raised platforms, which were made to represent different towns and places. Hell was a favorite subject in the religious drama and was represented by a dragon's head with gaping mouth and long teeth.

For the representation of the plays the pageant-cars were gaudily decorated. These wagons were a great expense upon the craftsmen, as was the cost of the production of their plays. An additional expense was the annual storage charge for the wagons, which were stored in regular pageant-houses. Often two companies owned a pageant-house or a pageant-wagon jointly. In such cases the same car was frequently used for the representation of two or more plays in the same cycle. The number of these scenes in a cycle, and hence the number of pageant-wagons required, varied greatly, from five scenes at Worcester to fifty-seven at York. And, finally, the time required for the representation of these pageants varied from one day at most of the towns to as many as three at Chester.

V

CORPUS CHRISTI STAGING

Introductory. In the preceding chapters of this volume our study has been devoted largely to the purely mechanical features of the pageants, though some attention was given in chapter III to the Corpus Christi procession as a determining factor in grouping the Old and New Testament plays into cycles. It now remains for us to consider the relations between these mechanical features and the plays themselves, together with some of the principles of staging that resulted from the conditions under which the cycles developed and continued to be produced.

Incongruities in the Plays. The conditions under which the plays developed resulted in the presence in the complete cycles of various contradictions and inconsistencies. Some of these are very striking, the most notable, perhaps, being the large number of incongruities in the plays, incongruities which any dramatist ought to have been able to detect and remove. These incongruous ele-

ments comprise inconsistencies within single scenes; inconsistencies and contradictions between scenes in more or less close proximity to each other; great inequality in the treatment, tone, style, and metre of the different plays of the same cycle; the narration of incidents in one play which have just been acted a few scenes back; and various other irregularities.

Some of these incongruities may well have existed in the cycles as originally composed; for it is very probable that the original cycles were produced by collaboration. And unless such collaboration was planned and executed with the utmost care, many such incongruities would almost inevitably occur. But we know both from the records and from the kinds of inequalities which we find in the plays, that the scenes were being continually revised. And hence we are able to find what seems to have been one of the principal causes of the inconsistencies; for in the revisions little or no care seems to have been taken to eliminate or to prevent contradictions and irregularities.

Development of New Scenes. One of the chief causes of these revisions and of the consequent incongruities was the normal expansion of the cycles, which came as a result of the natural increase in the number of play-producing companies. Whenever a new scene was needed, it was obtained either by dividing an original play,

by the development into a scene of what had formerly been an incident only, or by the creation of a new play from biblical, apochryphal, or legendary sources. Thus we find the York *Coming of the Three Kings* a divisible play, one which might be given as two separate scenes when the masons and goldsmiths were both playing, or as a single scene when the former were not able to support a pageant. Likewise the *Appearance of Our Lady to Thomas* in the same cycle seems to be one of those that was developed from what was earlier only an incident in an apochryphal biblical story. And in the Coventry cycle, though the play-book has not come down to us, "the matter of the Castell of Emaus" seems to have been an incident added to the cappers' play in 1540.[1]

Merging of Old Scenes. The cycles were not always growing, however, and the number of play-producing guilds was not always on the increase. On the contrary, the make-up of the list of companies was continually changing, one, or sometimes more, dropping out of the lists and making it necessary to telescope two or more scenes into one. Illustrations of the results of this process are to be found in the twentieth play of the Wakefield cycle, which represents the conspiracy, the Last Supper,

[1] Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, p. 94. Since this scene was one of the features of the early liturgical drama, however, it may be possible that the record implies only the composition of a new version of the old scene.

and the arrest of Christ; and in the sixth of the Chester series, presenting the annunciation, the visit of Mary to Elizabeth, and the nativity. The latter is an excellent example of an unskilful merging of at least two, or possibly three, plays.

All this "telescoping" and dividing of the plays and the expansion of minor incidents into new scenes, was the cause of numerous incongruities, inequalities, and inconsistencies in the stage representation of the plays, all of which will be taken up for discussion in their proper place in the succeeding chapters. In the same place, too, will be considered some of the other similar characteristics of the plays which were the result, not of their method of development, but of the circumstances under which they were produced. For the present, it is sufficient merely to call attention to these traits and to point out that they were a direct result of the open-air stages on which it was necessary to present the plays. Such are the use of *sedes* in the scenes, the reliance of the dramatists on the imagination of the hearers, the lack of perspective in staging, the symbolic treatment of space, time, and numbers, *etc.*

Influence of the Liturgical Sources. Meanwhile, at the same time that we are considering the various influences exercised upon the Corpus Christi stage, it may be well to examine one of the pre-cyclic influences, the liturgical drama; although the present writer is much opposed to the modern

tendency toward tracing every form, device, and method of literature back to some preceding form, device, or method—foreign preferred, native accepted. In other words—to be more specific, and to draw an illustration from the subject under consideration,—it seems that criticism is entirely and undoubtedly within the limits of safety in tracing the religious drama and many of its customs back to the early church; but when the attempt is made to derive all the stagecraft and the devices of the Corpus Christi plays, even the shape and arrangement of the stages and the *sedes,* from a direct and precise imitation of the church stage, then the developmental theory has been wholly misapplied. It is not fair to the managers and directors of the processional pageants of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries; it attributes to them flabby brains and minds without the power of initiative. In their plays, for instance, they did not put heaven on the upper stage and hell below merely because the liturgical drama had been staged in the church with heaven in the rood-loft and hell in the crypt, but because the almost universal idea was that these two places had definite geographical positions, heaven above us and hell below us. And the managers of the pageants did not build their stages on wheels and put their *sedes* or *loca* thereon to resemble the plans as used in the church, but for the better advantage of the spectators, that all might be able to see and hear.

Changes. On the contrary, however, it would not be at all just to say that the players and managers in the Corpus Christi days were consciously and purposely making their plans different from those of the church. The liturgical drama had been an interesting, spiritual, and stimulating power for good, and it was undoubtedly originally their intention merely to reproduce it in the open, with whatever modifications might be necessary, as a continued influence for good upon all persons viewing the performances. And this idea seems to have been carried out, but with so many and such varied modifications that, so far as the present writer has been able to perceive, the only practice which was not altered—an important one by the way—was that of using a separate *sedes, locus,* or *domus* for each important scene or character.

"Sedes" and "Plateae". The terms, *sedes, loca,* or *domus,* were used indiscriminately to mean either the seats of the actors where they remained when not participating in the play, or places to which on some occasions the action of the scene was transferred. These *sedes, loca,* or *domus,* so far as we can learn, were always definitely localized by means of appropriate decorations and properties and were in distinct contrast to the *platea,* which was the space in between the *sedes* and not definitely localized. M. Petit de Julleville has described at some length the system of staging employed for the representation of

the medieval French plays, and his description may well be applied here:—

> Le moyen âge avait conçu tout différemment la multiplicité des lieux dans la représentation dramatique. Pour jouer un mystère, on disposait d'avance, ensemble, à la fois, sur une scène unique, les lieux divers, si nombreux qu'ils fussent, où l'action devait successivement se passer. . . . mais au cours d'une même journée la scène était immuable et devait renfermer la représentation, ou l'indication tout au moins, des lieux, souvent fort nombreux, où se passait l'action dans cette journée. En un mot, la scène était permanente, à la fois unique et multiple, le décor ne changeait jamais; c'est l'action qui voyageait dans l'enceinte de cette vaste scène et se transportait successivement aux divers endroits représentés: allait de Rome à Constantinople, de Jérusalem en Espagne, traversait la mer ou les déserts, et feignait un long voyage entre deux pays figurés sur la scène à dix pieds l'un de l'autre. Les enfants dans leurs jeux ont des fictions analogues; mais toutefois ce système théâtral, qui nous paraît puéril, a suffi à Shakespeare.[2]

As M. Petit de Julleville suggests, there is a naive resemblance between these *domus* on the primitive stage and the "homes" of the make-believe world in the children's nursery, where each little would-be woman has her house in a corner of the room and receives her friends when they come to visit her. Shakspere on two occasions employed the same system of staging, as M. Petit de Julleville intimates, and many striking resemblances are to be found between the medieval stage and our theatre of to-day. We have miniature houses on our stages, imitative forests, pretended

[2] *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature francaise,* ii. 415-16.

city streets, *etc.*, which we are willing, for the sake of the enjoyment, to make ourselves feel are real. Our stage houses and our stage streets, for instance, we know are unreal, yet we allow an actor to enter the street from one of the houses, meet a friend perhaps at his doorway, and go up and sit on the verandah of a neighbor's house. Or perhaps the friends at another time meet at no special place, a field, a forest, or maybe in front of a bare, front drop-curtain—in other words, just somewhere.

Method of Staging. In the same way the actors on the Corpus Christi stage were attempting to reproduce a similar imaginary, imitative, and symbolical world. Nor was it an altogether crude and fanciful one. They had their seats, their homes, which by a temporary suspense of realism both they and their audience were able to convert into real ones. If they needed a castle in their little world, they built a miniature imitation at one side of the stage with fanes and battlements on the top, and the lord of the castle sat there with his soldiers and subjects around him. If they wanted a temple, they said "let's play like" this shelter or canopy is a temple, and Annas and Caiaphas shall be here. Or if Herod's palace was to be presented, they set a throne at his *sedes*, and any one who wanted to speak to the king must come to that specific place to see him. And when the action was such as might happen anywhere, the players

walked away from their places into the open *platea*, the unlocated part of the stage, and there the conversation was carried on.

Wakefield "Shepherds' Play, II." Thus in the Wakefield *Second Shepherds' Play* the action begins on the open *platea*, which is not a definitely localized place, but any spot where shepherds guard their sheep. One by one the herdsmen enter, Mak coming last, and all lie down and apparently go to sleep. Mak's sleep is not so deep as he pretends, however, and while the others are resting, he jumps up, steals a sheep, and carries it to his house, a definitely localized place, where he knocks and calls to his wife:

"how, gyll, art thou In? gett vs som lyght".

To which Gyll replies:

"Who makys sich dyn this tyme of the nyght?
I am sett for to spyn", *etc.*—ll. 296-98.

She lets him in and takes the sheep, however, and he returns to the sleeping shepherds in time to wake up with them. Their sheep is missed, of course; Mak's house is searched; and the sheep is found in the cradle. The shepherds have just finished "blanketing" Mak when the *Gloria in Excelsis* is begun at the other end of the stage, at Bethlehem, another definitely localized *sedes*, and the shepherds all journey there to worship the newborn King.

"Purification of Mary". Or, if the scene be the *Purification of Mary* on a stage at Chester, we find the pageant-car with two floors; the upper one is heaven, the lower one Bethlehem and Jerusalem. At the extreme right and on a raised part of the lower stage is an altar-like representation of the interior of the temple at Jerusalem. On the extreme left is Joseph's home in Bethlehem; and two apple-trees are clamped to the floor of the pageant to represent the country between Bethlehem and Jerusalem.[3] The scene opens with Simeon in the temple reading the prophecy of Isaiah about the coming of the Christ. He reads that a virgin shall bear a son. But he objects to the word "virgin"; so he erases it and writes "A good woman" instead. Anna and he join in conversation at this point; and an angel descends from Heaven, the floor above, and writes the original word "virgin". Again Simeon erases the objectionable word, and again the angel descends and restores the original reading; but this time the priest sees the angel, who tells him that he shall not die before he has seen the Christ. Simeon blesses God for his mercies, then goes *outside* the temple, *de alio loco procull a templo,* and seats himself in expectation of the coming of Christ. At this point Joseph and Mary in their house in Bethlehem at the other end of the stage begin talking and decide to go up to

[3] *Cf.* Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns,* p. 305. This will be discussed more fully later, pp. 178-79.

the temple at Jerusalem for her purification. They start out, pass by the two apple-trees representing the country between the two cities, and in a half-minute's time have gone the whole distance. Simeon receives the Christ in his arms and acknowledges him as his Lord. Anna does the same. But while the group are conversing, the child crawls down and goes into the temple. Joseph and Mary now start on their way home and, a little later, miss him; and while they are seeking him the child is disputing with the doctors in the temple, where they finally return and find him.

Interest in the Action. There is no confusion in such a stage-system as this. Nor in a certain sense can there be said to be any great amount of crudity. According to our ideas of stage-craft to-day such scenes would seem to indicate on the part of the dramatists of the time a lack of knowledge of the fitness, proportion, and possibilities of the stages which they were using; but, as the audience of that day saw it, there was no crudity at all. Their interest was centered almost wholly in the action, almost none at all in the setting, or background. It mattered not to them whether Christ was in a real stable, or a real manger, or whether the setting was one from Bethlehem or London; what they cared for were the antics of the rustic shepherds, the splendid robes of the three kings, the glorious gifts which these kings presented, and the adoration shown the Christ. It was the action of the

play, the movement of the characters in the scenes, not the backgrounds to these scenes, to which the audiences devoted their attention; and so long as the pageants and the *sedes* were decorated " costely and fyne ", their dramatic and esthetic taste was sufficiently satisfied.

The Pageant-Car as a " Sedes ". The relation of these pageant-cars to each other, however, and the relation of the *sedes* to the pageant-cars has been the cause of much discussion about Corpus Christi staging. For example, it has been held by many scholars that, though the stationary plays—such as the so-called *Ludus Coventriæ,* the Digby, or the Cornish plays—used the system of simultaneous scenery, of exposing two or more separate scenes on the same stage at the same time, yet the processional plays, such as those at Beverley, Chester, and York, were simple in scene,—in other words, that the pageant-wagons in the latter plays never represented more than one place at a time, and that, if additional *sedes* were needed, they were supplied by extra stages in the streets. Or, to put it another way, it has been maintained that the pageant-wagon in the processional play was not regarded as a stage at all, but as a single *sedes,* or *locus,* representing a fixed locality, and that the ground about the wagon was felt to be the stage.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that the pageant-wagon was the stage, that the separate *sedes* were placed on this stage, and that none of

our extant processional plays demand a larger stage than may be met with on the pageant-wagon.

Collier's Account. The apparent originator of this thus-far uncontradicted theory of Corpus Christi staging was J. Payne Collier, whose statement of his belief was as follows:

> They [the plays] were acted on temporary erections of timber, indifferently called scaffolds, stages and pageants; and there is no doubt that in some instances they were placed upon wheels, in order that they might be removed to various quarters of large towns or cities, and the plays exhibited in succession. The testimony of Archdeacon Rogers, who wrote his account of Chester prior to the death of Elizabeth, seems decisive upon this point, as far as the performances there are concerned. . . . The same authority would lead to the conclusion, that only one scaffold, stage, or pageant, was present at the same time in the same place, and doubtless such was the fact, according to the arrangement of the plays to which Archdeacon Rogers refers. It is indisputable, however, that the Chester Miracle-plays, as they exist in the British Museum, could not have been so represented. Some of the pieces require the employment of two, and even of three scaffolds, independent of other contrivances: the street also must have been used, as several of the characters enter and go out on horseback.[4]

Matthews's Account. This idea was adopted by Mr. Brander Matthews and crystallized as follows:—

> Thus we see that in France the stations used inside the church were set up side by side on the open-air stage out-

[4] *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 77-9.

side of the church, where they were known as mansions. In England the stations were separated and each was shown by itself, being called a "pageant". Sometimes these were stationary, and sometimes they were ambulatory. . . . For certain of the episodes, such as the Trial of Christ, for example, two floats were required, and the performers passed from one to the other as the incidents of the narrative might require.[5]

Chambers's Account. Mr. E. K. Chambers, in turn, accepted the same idea:—

It [the stage on the pageant-wagon] is simply the raised *locus, sedes,* or *domus* of the stationary play put upon wheels. Just as the action of the stationary play took place partly on the various *sedes,* partly in the *platea,* so Coventry actors come and go to and from the pageant in the street. 'Here Erode ragis in the pagond & in the strete also', says a stage direction. It should be observed that the plays at Coventry were exceptionally long, and that scaffolds seem to have been attached to the pageant proper in order to get sufficient space.[6]

Albright's Summary. And, finally, Mr. V. E. Albright has accepted and summarized the combined theory of the preceding writers as follows:

There are, however, certain plays in the cycles which require two or three distinct locations with characters travelling from one location to another. We can conceive of a very spacious wagon with two or three raised platforms on it, and the characters making a circle out in the street when they are supposed to pass from one place to another; or we can conceive of certain actors taking

[5] *Modern Philology,* i. 87-8.
[6] *Mediaeval Stage,* ii. 138.

their stand in the street as though they were on raised platforms, and passing from these spots to and from the pageant wagon as the action requires. But there is some evidence of another and a far more reasonable way. The quotation from Rogers ends with the sentence, "And also scafolds and stages [were] made in the streetes in those places where they determined to play theire pagiantes". Mr. Sharp, while searching "the ancient Books and Documents belonging to the Corporation [of Coventry], and the remaining Account Books and other writings of the Trading Companies", was constantly meeting with items for extra scaffolds on wheels, and eventually came to the following conclusion: "Various charges in the Pageant Accounts demonstrate that at Coventry, as at Chester, it was customary to have scaffolds or stages for the accommodation of the spectators: a few instances will suffice:—making of a new post to the scaffold;—a tryndyll and a theal to ditto;—two new scaffold wheels 6s. 8d.;—iron pins and colters to the scaffold wheels;—boards about the scaffold;—three boards and a ledge for the scaffold;—clamps and iron works;—setting in of the Pageant and scaffolds;—driving the Pageant and scaffolds. From these items it is evident that the 'scaffolds' were placed upon wheels, and moved with the Pageant, to which it probably was attached, as the usual charges are for 'having out of the Pageant, setting in the scaffolds: and setting in of the Pageant and scaffolds' to the Pageant-house after the performance was over". . . .

A more useful and necessary place for these inconspicuous scaffolds, inconspicuous both in the processions and in the accounts of the guilds, would be in the staging-apparatus. One or two of these "stages" could accompany the pageant that was playing a double- or treble-scene play, and could be used in the performance in the same way as the scaffolds around the castle in *The Castle of Perseverance*. In this way a difficulty would be re-

moved in the staging of some of the more complex plays in the processional cycles. . . .

My idea, therefore, is that the pageant wagons sufficed in some of the plays in the processional cycles, while in others, one or two plain scaffolds with few or no properties accompanied each pageant carriage. In certain cities, as at Coventry, these scaffolds were placed on wheels and drawn along with the pageants that needed them; in others, as at Chester, they were "made in the streetes in those places where they determined to play theire pagiantes". In both cases they were arranged at a distance of fifty to seventy-five feet from the main carriage. The spectacular scene took place on the pageant wagon, and the unscenic one or two on the scaffold or scaffolds near by; and the characters passed freely from one to the other, doing part of the acting on the *plateae,* just as in the stationary play.[7]

In other words, if the present writer has correctly interpreted the four authors quoted, they regard the pageant-wagon of the processional play as equivalent to a single *sedes,* or to the *platea,* in the church or on the stationary stage, rather than to the stage itself. A pageant-wagon, for instance, that corresponded to a *sedes* would be used for what Mr. Albright terms a "spectacular", or propertied, scene, and one that corresponded to a *platea* would be used for unpropertied and unlocated scenes. The same stage would always represent one and the same fixed locality and could never be used at the same time for two distinct and definitely located places; and if any play required

[7] *Shaksperian Stage,* pp. 25-7.

two or more propertied *sedes,* then extra pageants or extra scaffolds were procured to supply the need for keeping the locations separate. Oddly enough there is no evidence that the processional plays were ever so staged.

Basis of the Theory. The only apparently genuine evidence substantiating this view consists of the two passages cited by Mr. Albright from Sharp and the Rogers *Breviary of Chester.* But, as a matter of fact, the testimony which these passages have been supposed to contain can not be found when the passages are subjected to a critical examination. Sharp's account, to be sure, is just as Mr. Albright has given it, but, as Professor Manly has pointed out to the present writer, Mr. Albright has failed to notice that Sharp does not distinguish between the earlier Coventry pageants and the new play of the *Destruction of Jerusalem* in 1584, or that, without exception, every reference to a scaffold in the accounts as given by Sharp in his *Coventry Mysteries* occurs after 1580, the last year in which the ancient Corpus Christi pageants were presented. There are items before 1581, plenty of them, "for drynkynge at the pagent in havinge forthe", for "the reparellynge of the pagantte and the expences of havyng it in and furthe", for bringing the pageant "in to gosford-stret", "for the horssyng of the padgeant", "for swepyng the pagent & dressyng", for "þe havynge out & settynge in of the pageand", and for

numerous other expenses of a similar nature. But in not a single case is there any mention of an additional scaffold before 1584, when the *Destruction of Jerusalem* was given. As soon as that year is reached, however, we find immediately payments made "to Cookeson for makynge of a whele to the skaffolde", "for the settinge & drivinge off the pagyn & skaffoldes", "for mendynge off the skaffolds", and for other items of the same kind.

"**Destruction of Jerusalem**". On the other hand an examination of the accounts for the *Destruction of Jerusalem* discloses the fact that a huge stage must have been needed, a much larger one than could be carried through the streets on wheels. Hence the use of the scaffolds,—to lengthen or widen the old stage and to allow room for more *sedes* on the same platform. For instance, in the expense accounts for the *Destruction of Jerusalem* we find that the smiths' musicians accompanied their wagon and played "on theyre instruments in the Pagent". Of these musicians there were a trumpeter, a flute-player, "ij drumme players", and a chorus of we know not how many voices. In addition, there were twelve characters, besides the soldiers,—six of the actors, however, playing double parts. Some of the players were arrayed in Irish mantles; there was a storm and thunder; and a temple, probably Solomon's, was somewhere on the stage. The cappers, too, had a temple, twelve soldiers in red coats, six musicians besides

a trumpeter, and probably other things in proportion. So one may justly say that the *Destruction of Jerusalem* was a play with far more "business" than the simple Corpus Christi pageants and must consequently have necessitated far more playing space. And it seems fair to conclude that the extra scaffolds, of which numerous mentions are found in 1584 and later, but not before, must have been to afford this extra space.

Rogers's Statement. Again: Mr. Albright has cited the supposed statement of Archdeacon Rogers of Chester that "scafoldes and stages [were] made in the streetes in those places where they determined to playe theire pagiantes". Ordish, too, called attention to the same statement in his *Early London Theatres*[8] some years ago. But here again a careful examination of the evidence will show not only that its authenticity is questionable, but that probability is overwhelmingly against its evidence being accepted as reliable for matters of detail connected with the staging of the Corpus Christi plays. And there are three definite reasons why it cannot be entirely relied upon: (1) we cannot be certain whether Robert Rogers or his son wrote the material about "ye whitson playes"; (2) we cannot be sure that either father or son ever saw a Corpus Christi play presented; and (3) if the father was writing about the cycles as he saw them, the probability is that he was describing them as

[8] p. 10.

he last saw them, which was the last time they were presented at Chester, 1574, when they were given, not regularly, but all in "on part of the Citty".

(1) The authority of the Rogers's *Breviary* cannot be trusted for minute details with regard to the staging of the Whitson plays, because we can not tell what part was the work of the Archdeacon and what of his son. For example, Harl. MS 1948 tells us that the collections in the "*breauarye*" of Chester were "collected by the Reuerend: mr Robert Rogers, Batchlor in Diuinitye, Archdeacon of Chester, and Prebunde in the Cathedrall Church of Chester" and were written "per Dauid Rogers: 1609: July: 3". Now the Archdeacon died in 1595, and it is noteworthy that the *Breviary*, written by his son in 1609, fourteen years after his father's death, certainly contains matter subsequent to 1595. Hence one cannot say what or how much of the matter in the MSS was "collected" by the father. Hence, too, it is possible that the matter concerning the pageants may not have been collected by the father, but that it may have been written by the son from mere traditions of old Corpus Christi days. And hence, finally, we certainly cannot rely entirely on the material about the Whitson plays for matters of minute detail, such as the exact use of the stages on the Corpus Christi stage.

(2) We cannot be sure that either the father or

the son ever saw a Corpus Christi play presented. For example, their *Breviary* says of the plays in 1574, the last year they were given:—

> These 7 pagiantes weare played vpon ye third daye, beinge wensedaye; & these whitson playes weare played in Chester anno domini: 1574: Sr Iohn Sauage, knight, beinge Mayor of Chester, which was the laste tyme they weare played. And we haue all cause to power out our prayeres before God, that neither we nor oure posterities after us, maye neuer see ye like abomination of desolation, with such a Clowde of Ignorance to defyle with so highe a hand ye sacred scriptures of God: But of ye mercye of oure God for ye tyme of oure Ignorance he regardes it not: and thus much in briefe of ye whitson playes.[9]

Here then we find the writer of this document violently and religiously opposed to the pageants; and, having such scruples, it is more than doubtful whether he could ever have allowed himself to be present at an actual presentation of any of the plays. If it were the Archdeacon writing, he probably had seen the scaffolds in the streets in 1574, whether for spectators, musicians, or what, he did not know,—but it is very probable that he had not been at the plays; and to him the platforms in the streets were both "scafoldes and stages", though their exact use he did not know.

(3) If Archdeacon Rogers was the writer, it would seem probable that he must have had in mind the last presentation of the Corpus Christi

[9] Furnivall, *Digby Mysteries*, pp. xxii-iii.

plays at Chester in 1574; for in that year, we learn from Randle Holme's collections, "The whitson playes [were] played in pageantes in the Cittye: at midsomer, to the great dislike of many, because the playe was in on part of the Citty".[10] And if the pageants were given in one place in the city, being, moreover, a revival after a lapse of three years and on that account probably presented with greater *eclat* than ever before, it is not impossible that extra scaffolds and stages were really built in the streets for the spectators, the musicians, *etc.*, and hence that Rogers in referring to the pageants was thinking of them on this one occasion of twenty or twenty-five years before and writing of them as they had appeared in all the splendor of preparation for what had proved to be their final performance.

To state the case quite fairly, then: it seems that any evidence drawn from the Rogers document, even if there were no other grounds to the contrary —as there are,—is entirely too flimsy to be the basis of a whole theory on Corpus Christi staging. Sharp's account at Coventry has been shown to apply only to a special non-Corpus Christi play, the *Destruction of Jerusalem*, and the Rogers *Breviary*, if written by the elder man, would seem to refer, not only to pageants which the writer of the document had probably not seen, but to the irregular revived pageants of a particular year, 1574,

[10] Furnivall, *Digby Mysteries*, p. xxvi *n.*

when all the scenes, after an interval of three years, during which no plays had been produced, were presented " in on part of the Citty ".

This evidence seems all the more untrustworthy, too, when we come to consider that in all the existing records and accounts of the plays, records and accounts which extend over two hundred years of time, no other mention whatever, so far as the present writer has been able to discover, is to be found of extra stages and scaffolds. And it seems both inconceivable that a thory of any consequence could have been built on so slight a basis and, hence, fortunate that a large amount of other evidence is at hand to prove conclusively that extra stages were not needed, that more than one located scene was to be found on a single stage, and, therefore, that the processional wagon was regarded as the stage itself rather than as a simple *sedes.*

The Wakefield Plays. In discussing this phase of the staging of the Corpus Christi plays references will be made freely to those of the Wakefield cycle, even though they seem, from the MS that has come down to us, undoubtedly to have been produced on stationary platforms. For example, in the *Killing of Abel* the *Garcio* says:

Now old and yong, or that ye weynd,
The same blissyng withoutten end,
All sam then shall ye haue.[11]—ll. 443-5.

[11] *Cf.* Ebert, *Die englischen Mysterien,* p. 66 *n.*

From this speech of Cain's servant it seems clear that the plays of the Towneley cycle, like those of the Digby *Conversion of St. Paul,* were produced on a fixed stage and that the audience moved from one scaffold to another as the scenes succeeded each other.

On the other hand, however, it seems fair to refer to the plays of the Towneley cycle for methods of presentation because they were produced by the craftsmen of Wakefield just as in other towns, because several of the scenes have been shown by Miss Smith and Mr. Pollard to be practically identical with the corresponding scenes in the York cycle, and because in other points of technique, conventions, *etc.,* these plays show that they are of the regular Corpus Christi type. Therefore it may be fairly assumed that the Wakefield plays developed regularly, just as the other Corpus Christi cycles did, but that they have gone one step in advance of the other plays and have become stationary in order to accommodate themselves to the necessities of the annual Wakefield fair.[12] Hence we may be entirely justified in referring to the Wakefield plays for evidence as to methods of presentation.

Stationary and Processional Stages. Likewise evidence as to methods of presentation will be adduced from the Norwich pageants and other plays given on movable stages, whether those stages

[12] *Cf.* Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage,* ii. 416.

during the action were placed on a street corner, or in the market-place, or in a play-field, "play-stool", or any definite playing-place where the crowds of people might be shut off and money collected for entrance. This distinction is to be made, because some, like Mr. Osborn Waterhouse,[13] have been confused through failure to distinguish between the two. For example, Mr. Waterhouse says of the Norwich grocers' pageant-wagon: "The pageant itself was 'a Howse of Waynskott, paynted and buylded on a Carte, with fowre whelys', which latter, on stubborn occasions, were lubricated with soap".[14] And yet he says of the playing-place: "In 1489, a Corpus Christi procession was held, and the pageants were taken in procession *ad capell in Campis Norwici;* but we are not definitely informed whether the plays were actually *performed* at that time and at that place: it is however very probable. . . . The only reference to a place of performance known to us is the somewhat vague one mentioned above in connection with the procession, and, so far as we know, there is no authority for believing that the plays at Norwich went in circuit and were played at 'stations' in different parts of the town. Probability is in favour of a stationary place of performance, as was the case with the Coventry plays, the Cornish plays, and the

[13] *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays,* pp. xxxi-xxxii.
[14] *Ibid.,* p. xxxii. *Cf.* the description in this volume, p. 87.

plays at Reading, Shrewsbury and Edinburgh ".[15]

Now Mr. Waterhouse's trouble comes from a failure to recognize clearly the difference between a processional stage and a stationary one; for, while the underlying principle of the two kinds of staging was the same, the viewpoint and the stages themselves were very different. He failed to notice, however, that if a pageant-car were used and the play given at a definite station on a street corner, the action must necessarily be the same as if the wagon were taken to a play-field and the scene presented from the same stage there. The only difference was that the crowd could be shut off and admission prices charged in the one case, whereas in the other, on the street corner, this could not be done.

Simultaneous Scenery. In the following pages of this chapter, then, the plan will be to cite in detail evidence from the plays of Wakefield, Norwich, Coventry, and other cycles of processional plays and to show that the presentation of these plays cannot be explained on any other principle than that of simultaneous scenery, with the pageant-car as a stage rather than as a *sedes*. The term " simultaneous scenery ", too, will be used to mean the presence on the pageant-stage of two distinct and separately located scenes, both of which are visible and present to the audience at the same time. And by " multiple representation "

[15] *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

will be meant the simultaneous presence on the stage of actors in simultaneously decorated scenes that are supposed to be more or less distant from each other.

Pageant Large Enough. First of all, it must be recognized that the regular pageant stages, with the help of the street in some exceptional cases, were large enough to present any of the plays that have come down to us. We have heard always that the pageant-cars were big and spacious, and Archdeacon Rogers's, or his son's, statement that the carriages "stoode vpon 6 wheeles" would indicate that they must have been very large, so large that an extra pair of wheels was needed to support the weight of the wagon in the center. To this may be added the evidence, slight though it be, of the "parcel of land in Mill Lane", Coventry, "30½ feet wide and 70½ long", on which the weavers' pageant-house was erected. Such evidence, it is true, can be regarded only as negative, but it is worth noting that a space of ground of this size would offer ample room for a pageant-wagon large enough to stage any of the cyclic plays.

"Sedes" on the Stages. In the second place, attention should be called to the fact that we have positive evidence of *sedes* on the Corpus Christi stages. Sharp prints the following record of boards bought for the angels' *sedes* ("pulpits" they are called here) in the Coventry drapers' play of *Doomsday:*

1565.—payd for iiij yards of boorde to make pulpytts for the angells . . . . . viijd
payd for a pece of wode to make feete for them . . . . . iiijd
payd to the carpenters for makyng ij pulpytts &c . . . . . iiijs [16]

Too much stress cannot be laid on this entry; for we have here a definite reference to the two separate *sedes* for the good and the bad angels at Doomsday. "iiij yards of boorde" could not have made scaffolds for these angels; therefore we may suppose that this lumber must have been meant for the regular pageant *sedes*.

Coventry "Purification". The Coventry *Purification of Mary* also furnishes indisputable evidence of the use of both raised *sedes* and simultaneous scenery in its presentation. As there is nothing in the first part of the play that necessitates the use of *sedes*, we may pass over that and take up the action at the point where Simeon goes from his home to that of his clerks, to inform them of the coming of Christ. In the course of the conversation which ensues at the clerks' *sedes*, Simeon and one of the clerks make the following remarks about decorating the temple for the visit of Christ:

Clarecus. Then hast we this alter to araye
And clothis off onowre theron to laye
Ande the grownde straw we with flowris gay
Thatt of oddur swetely smellis.

[16] *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 71.

Semeon. And when he aprochis nere this
place,
Syng then with me thatt conyng hasse
And the othur the meyne space
for joie rynge ye the bellis.—ll. 359-66.

There Semeon and his Clarks gothe vp to the tempull and Gaberell cumyth to the tempull dore and seyth [that Mary must come now and make her offering.]

Here we have Simeon and his clerk referring to the altar as if it were plainly visible and immediately at hand ("this alter", "when he aprochis nere this place"), whereas they are both supposedly some distance away and ought not to be able to see the altar inside the temple. And that the temple and altar—they are both spoken of as one and the same thing—are on a raised *sedes,* is evidenced by the fact that "Semeon and his Clarks gothe vp to the tempull". If the temple were on the pageant-wagon and the clerks' *locus* on a scaffold across the street, as Mr. Albright would have us believe, the direction would be "gothe over", not "gothe vp".

But there are still other references to the elevation of this *sedes* above the rest of the stage. When Joseph and Mary approach the temple, the direction reads: *Here the* [Simeon and his clerks] *cum downe with presession to mete them.* And other stage-directions are: *There Mare and Josoff departis owt of the vpper parte of the pagand* (after l. 704); *There the all goo vp to the*

awter and Iesus before (after l. 805); *There the goo done into the for pagond and Iesus steylyth awey* (after l. 814). Likewise the speech of Mary after l. 1028 shows the elevation of the temple *sedes*:—

> [Mary.] See, husebond, where he syttyth aloft
> Amonge yondur masturs soo moche off myght.
> —ll. 1029-30.

The definiteness of these references led Sharp to the following conclusions: "The preceding directions, and extract from Mary's speech to her husband, evidently show that there were two floors or stages in the Pageant vehicle, one somewhat higher than the other, and representing an interior view of the Temple, as it should seem, and whereon a considerable portion of the play was performed. It must not, however, be understood that one of these floors was above, *i. e.* over the other, but that when the scene lay in the Temple, the performers ascended by one or more steps to the back division of the stage, which . . . was probably fitted up so as to favour this supposed change of place".[17]

Another reference to the raised *sedes* on the stage is to be found in the Towneley *Caesar Augustus*, where, when Sirinus comes to visit Caesar, the latter says:—

[17] *Weavers' Pageant*, p. 14.

Imperator. Welcom, sir syrynne, to this hall,
Besyde my self here sytt thou shall,
Come vp belyf to me.—ll. 154-6.

And the "selldall for god" mentioned in the Coventry smiths' accounts for 1560,[18] although Sharp thought it "perhaps the *settle* or *seat* on which Christ was placed in mock dignity, in the interval between his condemnation and crucifixion", may have been a special *sedes* for Christ.

Crucifixion Scenes. And, finally, attention may be called to the fact that crucifixion scenes were customarily represented on a raised *sedes.* In the York shearmen's *Christ Led up to Calvary* John and Maria Sancta go up to Calvary, but are run "doune þe hill" by the soldiers.[19] Likewise in the butchers' *Death and Burial of Christ* we find Pilate going to visit the body of the crucified Christ and referring to him on "ȝone hill". And the robber crucified on Christ's left asks him,

If þou be Goddis sone so free,
Why hyng þou þus on þis hille?—ll. 196-7.

In the Chester *Passion* Christ is led *versus montem Calvariae;* and in the ironmongers' *Crucifixion,* when Symon of Syrrye is found on the way to Calvary, he is bidden to come

[18] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries,* pp. 26-7.
[19] Smith, *York Plays,* p. 344, l. 210.

And take this crosse anon in hye,
Unto the mounte of Calverye.[20]

These crucifixion scenes probably were trebly influenced in being thus placed on a raised *locus* always. The convention of elevated *sedes,* as Chambers has shown, had been inherited from the church liturgical plays, in which the crucifix customarily stood above the altar. But, in addition to this influence, the Englishmen of the fifteenth century, almost all of whom were Catholic, were accustomed to seeing the crucifix regularly in an exalted place above the high altar of the church. And, finally, when we remember the common tradition that the crucifixion took place on a hill, it seems reasonable to suppose that this treble influence must have had its weight in putting the crucifixion scenes on raised *sedes* in the pageant-wagons.

Thus we have found what seems incontrovertible evidence of the use of individual, raised *sedes* on the Corpus Christi stages and, hence, evidence that the wagons were regarded as stages rather than as separate *sedes.* Our evidence so far, however, does not prove that simultaneous representation was used. It remains now, therefore, to prove, not only that individual *sedes* were used on the Corpus Christi wagons, but that two or more

[20] Wright, *Chester Plays*, ii. 51. The phrase, "in hye" (in haste), of course has nothing to do with the point in question.

of these *sedes* were to be found decorated and visible on one pageant-wagon at the same time.

York "Purification of Mary". Let us look first at the York *Purification of Mary,* where two *sedes,* one for the temple at Jerusalem and one for Joseph's house at Bethlehem, were so close together on the same stage as to cause actual confusion in the MS. The play opens with the Prisbeter in the temple at Jerusalem telling us that he is there to receive all offerings brought into the temple. Anna, too, abides in the temple day and night, and she prophesies that Christ will soon be brought into the temple. The scene then shifts to Simeon's house in Jerusalem, where the old man is bewailing his age and feebleness and praying God that he may see the Christ before he dies. At this point an angel enters and promises him that he shall see Jesus. Then the scene shifts to the house of Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem, beginning as follows:

> *Mary.* Joseph, my husbonde and my feer,
> Ye take to me grathely entent,
> I wyll you showe in this manere,
> What I wyll do, thus haue I ment.
> Full xl days is comme and went
> Sens that my babb Jesu was borne,
> Therefore I wolde he were present,
> As Moyses lawes sais hus beforne,
> Here in this temple before Goddes sight.—
> ll. 187-95.

After some debate and hesitation they decide to go, and at line 270, to show that they have not yet started, we find:—

> *Mar.* Joseph, my spowse, ye say full trewe,
> Than lett vs dresse hus furth our way.

To which Joseph replies:

> *Jos.* Go we than Mary, and do oure dewe,
> And make meekly offerand this day.
> ll. 272-3.

But immediately in the next line, he says, "Lo, here is the temple", *etc.;* and they enter and offer their two doves. Then the scene changes again and shows us Simeon's house, or *sedes,* with an angel bidding him get ready and come to the temple, where he shall see Christ; and he goes and receives the child.

According to Mr. Albright's theory, the temple in this scene must have been on one stage, probably the pageant-wagon because that was certainly propertied, while Simeon's and Joseph's houses must have been represented by separate scaffolds "at a distance of fifty to seventy-five feet from the main carriage".[21] But this theory is proved to be absolutely untenable by line 195, where Mary, while still in her house in Bethlehem, refers to the

[21] Albright, *Shaksperian Stage,* p. 27.

temple in Jerusalem as " Here in this temple before Goddes sight ". Miss L. T. Smith observed this incongruity in the staging and characterized it as " probably a slip due to the fact that Bethlehem and the temple were near together on the stage ",[22] which must have been the case. For, in addition to the indication in Mary's speech that the temple is " here ", immediately on their leaving their home in Bethlehem we find them at the temple and preparing to enter, thus showing that the two *sedes* must have been immediately adjacent to each other on the same stage. Certainly Mr. Albright's theory of a distance of fifty or seventy-five feet cannot be held for a moment; for they could never have left one stage, walked a distance of twenty yards or more, and yet have confused the two *sedes* with each other.

Likewise, it cannot be doubted for a moment that the scenes in this play of the *Purification of Mary* were decorated and represented simultaneously. One instance only will suffice. When Joseph and Mary have entered the temple, offered their doves, and Anna has welcomed the blessed babe " here in this hall ", she suddenly breaks off in her speech of welcome and the action begins in Simeon's house with the angel bidding Simeon come to the temple to see Jesus. Here, then, we have two simultaneous scenes, the angel and Simeon at one *sedes* and the Prisbeter, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus at

[22] *York Plays*, p. 439 *n.*

another; and the temple scene has to wait till Simeon can get there to hail the babe and the mother.

York "Adoration". The York Adoration begins with the three Magi meeting on their way to Bethlehem. Jerusalem comes first in their journey, however; so they decide to stop at Herod's court in Jerusalem to get his permission to pass through the land. The three kings are here dropped in the midst of their journey and the scene shifts to Herod's seat, where a *nuntius* announces the presence of the Magi in the land and their coming to the court. At this Herod exclaims:

> *Herod.* Haue done; dresse vs in riche array,
> And ilke man make tham mery chere.—
> ll. 91-2.

The Magi now arrive and beg Herod's permission to seek the Christ. He at first refuses, but on the advice of one of his counsellors changes his mind and decides to let them go, but with the promise that they will report to him when they have found Jesus, he thinking that he himself may thus find out the Christ and put him to death. Then Herod says:

> Sir kyngis, I halde me paide
> Of all youre purpose playne.
> Wendis furth, youre forward to fulfill,
> To Bedlem, it is but here at hande.—ll. 191-4.

Herod, let it be noted, is in Jerusalem at his court, and yet he speaks of Bethlehem as " here at hande ", —not over yonder on the other platform, but here on the other end of this stage. Then the three kings depart and Herod begins rejoicing over the trap he has laid, concluding his speech as follows:

> Go we nowe, till þei come agayne,
> To playe vs in som othir place.
> This halde I gud counsaill,
> Yitt wolde I no man wist;
> For sertis, we shall not faill
> To loyse þam as vs list.—ll. 211-16.

Then occurs the direction: "*Nota,* the Harrod passeth, and the iij kynges comyth agayn to make there offerynges". Accordingly they enter, exclaiming that they have lost their sign, the star; but on finding it immediately, they go to the other end of the stage and make their offerings to the child in the manger. Then the scene closes with an angel warning them to go home by another route and not to see Herod any more.

The point of chief interest to us about this scene is that Herod's court in Jerusalem and the stable in Bethlehem must both have been on the same stage and visible at the same time. Why else should it be necessary for Herod to retire before the three kings enter again? That Jerusalem and Bethlehem were both on the same stage is shown both by the

fact that Herod retires before the three kings come again and by Herod's reference to Bethlehem as "here at hande"; and that they were presented simultaneously must be admitted from the speech of the first king:—

> *i Rex.* Sir, of felashippe are we fayne,
> Now sall we wende forth all in feere,
> God graunte vs or we come agayne
> Som gode hartyng þer-of to here.
> Sir, here is Jerusalem,
> To wisse vs als we goo,
> And be-yonde is Bedleem,
> þer schall we seke alsoo.—ll 53-60.

These lines indicate clearly three places, two of them simultaneously decorated: Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the meeting-place of the Magi. The evidence, however, as to how these *loca* were represented is less clear. It seems probable that Bethlehem was a house in which were Joseph, Mary, a maid, and the child in a manger. This much may be surmised from the popular conception of the scene, as well as from the speeches of the maid and the three kings at the door of the stable.—

> *i Rex.* A! siris! I se it [the star] stande
> A-boven where he is borne,
> Lo! here is þe house at hande,
> We haue noȝt myste þis morne.

[*Maid comes to the door.*]

Anc. Whame seke ȝe syrs, be wayes wilde,
With talkyng, trauelyng to and froo?
Her wonnes a woman with her childe,
And hir husband; her ar no moo.—ll. 225-32.

This house scene would be unintelligible without decorations of some kind, especially since the Magi do not come at once upon the holy family, but meet the maid first, probably at the door of the house.

And as to the localization of the Jerusalem, or Herod, *sedes,* there is even less definite evidence; but we may suppose that at least a throne for Herod was used and that this was placed between the Bethlehem *locus* and the *platea* where the three kings come together; for the first king when they meet speaks of Jerusalem as "here" and Bethlehem "be-yonde". This would locate the *platea* at one end, Herod's throne in the middle, and Joseph's stable at the other end of the wagon.

There is another question raised by this play: Were the holy family and Herod and his followers on the stage from the beginning? If they were, the matter of simultaneous scenery is settled at once; and it seems more than probable that they were; for no mention of an entrance is made anywhere—none is needed after the beginning of the play, provided they were all already in their seats, —and the only exit made is that of Herod.

Herod's exit is entirely understandable, however, since he has no further part in the play and since the three kings must pass by his *sedes,* even if they go home "be other waies". And since, too, his exit is noted in the directions, it is entirely consistent with his having been on the stage from the beginning of the scene.

Entrances and Exits. And while we are on the subject of exits, mention may be made of the system of entrances and exits in the Coventry shearmen and tailors' play. Some of the stage-directions are as follows: *Here the angell departyth, and Joseff cumyth in* (after l. 99); *There the scheppardis syngith ageyne and goth forthe of the place; and the ij profettis cumyth in* (after l. 331); *There the profettis gothe furthe and Erod cumyth in, and the messenger* (after l. 474); *Here Erod goth awey and the iij kyngis speykyth in the strete* (after l. 539); *Here Erode cumyth in ageyne* (after l. 602); *etc.* The question may be legitimately asked again here: If Mr. Albright's adopted theory is correct and there were extra stages and scaffolds for the representation of the scenes, why should entrances and exits be found necessary? The answer plainly is not to be found in such a theory as that advanced by Mr. Albright. On the contrary, the answer is to be found only in the fact that there was a single pageant-stage, which the dramatists found too small to contain all the *sedes* necessary for a proper representation of

their plays. The result was that they were compelled to remove the actors from their limited stage, in order to present adequately this play of the annunciation, the visit to Elizabeth, Joseph's trouble about Mary, the nativity, *etc.*

Chester "Entry into Jerusalem". But our evidence does not stop here. The Chester cycle has many indications of simultaneous scenery and of the pageant-wagon as a stage rather than as a *sedes.* The fourteenth play, *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem,* begins with Christ telling his disciples that they will go to Bethany, whither they have been invited by Simon the Leper. Peter and Philip reply, and then comes the stage-direction: *Tunc ibunt versus domum Simonis Leprosi.* Simon, Lazarus, and Martha welcome Christ and *Tunc Jesus sedebit, et omnes cum eo, et veniet Maria Magdelena, cum albastro unguenti, et lamentando dicat Maria Magdelena.* Mary washes the feet of her Lord, Judas objects to the waste of the ointment, and *Tunc surget Jesu, et stando dicat discipulis suis ut sequitur.*

Jesus.

Petter and Phillipe, my brethren free
Before you a castill you maie see:
Goe you theider, and feche anon to me
An asse and her fole also. . . .
Tunc ibunt in civitatem, et dicat primus janitor.

Peter and Philip get the donkey and return to Jesus, and the Janitor announces the coming of Christ to the citizens, who go to meet him, singing "Hosanna", *etc. Tunc Jesus equitabit versus civitatem, et omnes cives pannos suos in via prosternent, et cum venerit ad templum descendens de asina dicat vendentibus cum flagello:*

Doe awaye, and use not this thinge,
For it is not my likinge;
You make my fathers dwellinge
A place of merchandise.

Primuz marcator.

What frecke is this that makes fare,
And casteth downe all our ware?
Come no man heither full yare,
That did us suche anoye.

Secundus marcator.

Owte! out! woes me!
My table with my moneye
Is spread abrode.

The rest of the play does not serve our present purpose, but this much is sufficient to show the use of simultaneous scenery on the pageant-stage. And it shows itself, too, in direct contradiction to

Mr. Albright's theory of one propertied *locus* and all the others bare; for in this play two of the *sedes* were certainly propertied. The house of Simon, for instance, had seats for Jesus and his disciples and must therefore have been a permanently decorated *sedes*. Likewise, the temple must have been propertied; for the first seller speaks of having all his "ware" cast down, and the second seller refers to the table on which his money was spread. Furthermore, the temple as a whole must have been indicated by a definite enclosure from which the sellers could be driven. In fact, it would be difficult to find a play showing clearer evidence of the necessity of simultaneous scenery, or one more directly in opposition to Mr. Albright's theory.

The Chester "Passion". The evidence for simultaneous scenery in the Chester *Passion* is definite and clear, although Mr. Albright has included this play among those which he thinks would illustrate his theory. Of this scene he says:

> *Chester, Passion of Christ.* Christ is sent from the Bishops (one scaffold) to Pilate (on the pageant wagon, because most of the action takes place there), who in turn sends him to Herod (another scaffold). He is soon returned to Pilate (pageant), where the trial, final judgment, and long scenes of torture follow.[23]

On the contrary, all the actual evidence as to the staging of this pageant is opposed to Mr. Albright's view, as is clear from an analysis of the play.

[23] *Shakesperian Stage*, p. 28.

The scene opens with Christ and the Jews at the hall of Annas and Caiaphas, where Christ is accused and tortured. The stage-direction states: *Tunc Judei statuent Jesum in cathedram; et dicat torquendo Primuz Judeus.* Christ is next led to Pilate's hall (*Tunc Cayphas et Annas et Judei adducant Jesum ad Pylatum*); then to Herod (*ad Herodem*); and finally back to Pilate (*ad Pilatum*), where he is despoiled of his clothing and tied to a column (*Tunc spoliabunt ipsum et ligabunt ad columnam*).

These stage-directions point clearly to three different *sedes* in this play, the halls of Annas and Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod. It would seem probable that these places were represented by chairs, or thrones, or some such property as would fittingly symbolize the rank and dignity of the rulers. It is certain, however, that Annas and Caiaphas's and Pilate's *sedes* must have been decorated and visible at the same time; for Christ is made to sit in a chair (*in cathedram*) at the Annas-and-Caiaphas *sedes* and is bound to a column of some kind (*ad columnam*) at Pilate's. And since Pilate had to remain in his seat, in order to be there when the Jews and Christ returned from Herod, it cannot be doubted that the play was multiple and simultaneous in both scenery and representation.

The Chester "Ascension". Play XXI of the Chester cycle presents the *Ascension* and affords clear evidence of the simultaneous representation

of two propertied scenes. The play begins with a speech by Christ:—

> My brethren that sitten in companye,
> With peace I greete you hartelye.—ll. 1-2.

Christ eats with his disciples later at this *sedes* (*comedit Jesus cum discipulis suis*), and we may believe that he, too, sits with them, probably about a table. Then, after the meal is finished, the stage-direction reads: *Tunc adducit discipulos in Bethaniam, et cum pervenerit ad locum ascendens dicat Jesus, stans in loco ubi ascendit, Data est michi omnis potestas in celo et in terra.* From here he ascends into heaven, but while in mid-air he stops and speaks to his disciples: *Cum autem impleverit Jesus canticum, stet in medio quasi supra nubes. . . . Jesus autem pausans eodem loco dicat.*

This outline and these directions afford conclusive proof of the multiple representation of two propertied scenes. In the first scene a table and some chairs must certainly have been present; and in the second some device, probably a windlass,[24] was used, so that Christ could ascend to heaven and yet stop midway (*supra nubes*) for a final exhortation to his disciples. And since both the *sedes* were furnished with permanent properties, the play was multiple throughout.

Towneley Cycle. A sufficient number of

[24] *Cf.* Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, pp. 47 and 72.

examples has probably been given already to prove conclusively that more than one simultaneous, decorated scene was to be found on a single Corpus Christi stage and that the pageant-wagon was itself the whole stage. But for the sake of showing the uniform principles of representation in all the cycles it is necessary to consider the Towneley series as well.

Towneley "Creation". The Towneley *Creation* begins with the narration and symbolical representation by God of the events of the first five days of the world. At the end of the fifth day God halts in his narration sufficiently to allow the *Cherubyn* to praise him at length for his wondrous works. Then occurs the stage-direction: *hic deus recedit à suo solio & lucifer sedebit in eodem solio.* Next follow Lucifer's growing pride and ambition and the overthrow of him and his hosts into hell. Then, after their fall, the first angel exclaims:

> Alas, alas, and wele-wo!
> lucifer, whi fell thou so?
> We, that were angels so fare,
> and sat so hie aboue the ayere,
> Now ar we waxen blak as any coyll.
>
> —ll. 132-6.

God now proceeds to the creation of man, which he accomplishes by the mere act of touching him.—

[*Deus.*] now make we man to oure liknes,
that shall be keper of more & les,
of fowles, and fysh in flood. *Et tanget eum.*
spreyte of life I in the blaw,
good and ill both shall thou knaw;
rise vp, and stand bi me.—ll. 165-70.

Then God creates woman and decides to put the pair into paradise. So he says to his angel, who has not been concerned in the action involving the creation of man and woman:

[*Deus.*] Ryse vp, myn angell cherubyn,
Take and leyd theym both in,
And leyf them there in peasse.—ll. 195-7.
Tunc capit cherubyn adam per manum, etc.

The man and the woman are then led into paradise and the play ends with a hell-scene which explains that man was made to take the place of the fallen angels.

This play has been cited because of the passage showing the custom of the actors remaining on the stage when not in action, as well as for its evidence of the use of multiple scenery. When God has need of the angel, there is no direction, "Enter Angel", thereby indicating that the actor has been off the stage; but God commands, "Ryse vp, myn angell cherubyn", showing that the character has been sitting in his *locus* waiting for his time to play.

From this play we may see also that multiple decoration must have been used on the Wakefield stage. Hell was represented; the angel had a *locus;* God had a throne into which Lucifer climbed while the Father was away; and Paradise was at least decorated with a tree and some sort of enclosure from which the man and woman might be driven. The whole is a clear example of the use of multiple decorations.

The Towneley "Conspiracy". One other scene from this cycle will suffice. The *Conspiracy* is a long play including the Last Supper, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and the betrayal of Christ. It begins in Pilate's hall, where Judas enters and bargains to betray his master. Then Pilate says:

> *Pilatus.* we shall hym haue, and that in hy,
> ffull hastely here in this hall.
> Sir knyghtys, that ar of dede dughty,
> stynt neuer in stede ne stall,
> Bot looke ye bryng hym hastely,
> that fatur fals, what so befall.—ll. 306-11.

Then the action at this *sedes,* Pilate's hall, ceases, and Pilate and his group remain silent for a space of about two hundred lines. The question immediately arises: Do they remain in their places, histrionically invisible, or do they actually leave the stage? We have found in the play just discussed

that the actors kept their seats, and we shall see later in this volume [25] that they regularly kept their places when not in action. Therefore it may be supposed with a reasonable degree of certainty that Pilate and his men merely remained silent at their *sedes* while the action was going on at the other side of the stage.

At l. 314 the disciples and Christ take up the action, the latter bidding John and Peter go into the city, where they will meet a man who will lend a room in which the Passover may be eaten. John and Peter go into the city, meet the man, and he lends them a chamber. Then occurs the direction: *Tunc parent Iohannes & petrus mensam.* Here, then, we must have two places visible at the same time, the place where Christ and his disciples are (probably the *platea*) and the chamber where John and Peter are (a definitely located *sedes*), even if we leave out of account the probability that Pilate's hall, either with or without its actors, is still visible to the audience.

Then, after the Passover has been eaten and the disciples' feet have been washed, Christ says to his followers:

> Ryse ye vp, ilkon,
> and weynd we on oure way,
> As fast as we may gone,
> to olyuete, to pray.

[25] *Cf.* pp. 160-67.

Peter, Iamys, and Iohn,
ryse vp and folow me!
My tyme it commys anone;
Abyde styll here, ye thre.
Say youre prayers here by-neth.—ll. 488-96.

This passage indicates a third located *sedes,* Mt. Olivet, which must have been distinguished by an elevation of at least a few feet, because the disciples are bidden to remain "here by-neth" until Christ returns.

In this play, then, it is perfectly clear that at least three, and possibly four, places were distinguished on the stage at one time: Pilate's hall, Mt. Olivet, the chamber in which the Passover was eaten, and possibly the "city" as distinguished from the chamber. The room was localized certainly by a table and chairs, Pilate's hall perhaps by a throne, and Mt. Olivet by an elevation of a few feet above the rest of the stage.

Illustrations Chosen by Mr. Albright. In our argument, however, we need not confine ourselves to plays that may have escaped the notice of those who regard the pageant-wagon as a *sedes* rather than as a stage. Let us look for a moment at the plays which Mr. Albright himself has chosen to stage according to his theory, remembering, however, that he has no basis for his method other than a mere opinion—one which we have already found to be without foundation. For lack of space only

two of these, in addition to the Chester *Passion* already discussed,[26] will be taken up, but the hastiest adequate study possible will show that Mr. Albright's view, even in his own chosen plays, is far less probable than that of a single stage for each complete scene.

York "Angels and Shepherds". One of those that Mr. Albright mentions is the York *Angels and Shepherds,* the staging of which he sketches as follows:

> *York, The Angels and the Shepherds.* The shepherds have met and are in the midst of a discussion (scaffold), when the star appears and directs them to the place where Christ is born (pageant).[27]

But there is another and, with what we now know of Corpus Christi staging, a far more plausible view of the method of presenting this play. The scene is supposed to center around Bethlehem and the fields near by, and a big moveable pageant-wagon with double stages is used to represent the whole. The upper stage is heaven, where the angels sit; the lower one is Bethlehem and the fields near by. The part of the lower stage representing Bethlehem is decorated to represent a house or stable, in which an old man with a long white beard sits with a young woman and a child in a crib. The rest of the stage represents the fields

[26] *Cf.* pp. 149-50.
[27] *Shaksperian Stage,* p. 27.

outside Bethlehem, where three shepherds are walking. The First Shepherd is talking:—

> [*i Past.*] Oure forme-fadres, faythfull in fere,
> Bothe Osye and Isaye,
> Preued þat a prins with-outen pere
> Shulde descende doune in a lady,
> And to make mankynde clerly,
> To leche þam þat are lorne.
> And in Bedlem here-by
> Sall þat same barne be borne.—ll. 5-12.

The Second Shepherd replies:

> *ii Past.* Or he be borne in burgh hereby,
> Balaham, brothir, me haue herde say,
> A sterne shulde schyne and signifie,
> With lightfull lemes like any day.—ll. 13-16.

The Third Shepherd speaks; then the angels in heaven above begin singing, and a star is hung out from the top of the stage. The shepherds gaze in wonder at the vision of the angels and at the star; they discuss the whole and attempt to imitate the music; and then they go into the house and adore the child.

It is very noticeable here that Bethlehem is spoken of as "here-by" and that, after the vision of the angels in the sky at line 36 of the play, the

three shepherds discuss the music and the angels and their prophecy for forty-five lines, but they make no attempt whatever toward going to Bethlehem before line 82; and yet at line 86, in the time taken to repeat four lines, they are there. The whole passage, beginning with the speech of the Third Shepherd at line 79, is as follows:

iii Pas. Hym for to fynde has we no drede, (79)
I sall you telle a-chesonne why,
ȝone sterne to þat lorde sall vs lede.
ii Pas. ȝa! þou sais soth, go we for-thy (82)
hym to honnour.
And make myrthe and melody,
with sange to seke oure savyour.
Et tunc cantant.
i Pas. Breder, bees all blythe and glad, (86)
Here is the burght þer we shulde be.

And yet this is one of the plays which Mr. Albright thinks is a sure indication of his view of separate stages for each scene!

The Towneley "Purification". The Towneley *Purification* is another play that Mr. Albright has chosen to illustrate his theory of Corpus Christi staging. Of this scene he says:

Towneley, Purification. Simeon praying that he may see the Christ and die (one scaffold) is directed to the temple, where the bells are ringing (pageant). Mary and

Joseph (on another scaffold) think it time for the purification, and start for the temple. There (at the pageant) they are all supposed to meet.[28]

Mr. Albright has given a correct, brief outline of the play, but there is no evidence whatever for his method of staging. In the first place, the play, as we have it, was not given on a pageant-wagon,[29] a fact which Mr. Albright failed to notice, but on a fixed stage; and the present writer can see no need whatever for requiring three separate stages for this one scene. On the contrary, Simeon had his *sedes,* Joseph and Mary theirs, and there was a separately decorated one for the temple,—all on the same stage. Simeon's and Joseph's may or may not have been decorated; the MS offers no evidence whatever. Then the angel came and summoned Simeon to the temple *sedes,* where Joseph and Mary met him a few minutes later.

Multiple Representation. In the same way the rest of the plays cited by Mr. Albright might be analyzed—likewise any other play in any other cycle,—but these seem sufficient to show the use of simultaneous scenery on the pageant-wagon. Seven plays in all have now been noticed from the Chester, Coventry, Towneley, and York cycles, all of them, it seems to the author, showing the same use of simultaneous scenery, with the pageant-wagon as the stage rather than as a *sedes.* And

[28] *Loc. cit.,* p. 28.
[29] *Cf.* p. 129.

the argument would now be complete[30] if it were not for the fact that some one might raise the objection that the scenes enacted in the plays above cited may have been successive rather than simultaneous. In other words, it might be objected that after the creation of the nine orders of angels in the York *Creation,* while Lucifer was making his plans against the heavenly hosts, *Deus* did not withdraw to a separate part of the stage, but left the platform entirely, as the custom was in Elizabeth's day, thus giving another scene; or, after the fall of Lucifer, while the demons were raging and reproaching each other, that *Deus* and the rest of the angels were not visible on the upper stage, but had withdrawn and made the scene successive rather than multiple; and after Lucifer and his companions had ceased their wrangling and *Deus* had taken up his cue on the upper platform, that the demons had withdrawn entirely and were no longer visible;—in other words, that the scenery was simultaneous and the representation successive rather than multiple. This is a view hardly tenable in view of what is now known of the Corpus Christi stage; for we have already seen in the Wakefield cycle that the custom was for the actors to keep

[30] To the argument already advanced for all the *sedes* on a single pageant-wagon the author would like to add a further argument that the *platea,* as well as the *sedes,* was sometimes propertied and decorated. A propertied *platea* would be an impossibility according to Mr. Albright's theory. Proof for this argument of a propertied *platea* is reserved for the next chapter. *Cf.* pp. 170-86.

their positions when not engaged in action.[81] The same convention might therefore be reasonably expected to have existed in the other cycles; and a few examples are given here to show that such was the case.

York "Dream of Pilate's Wife". The York *Dream of Pilate's Wife and Jesus before Pilate* opens with a scene in Pilate's judgment-hall, where Pilate receives a visit from his wife, Dame Percula, who brings with her their son and a maid. After a rather lengthy visit, during which the family all drink wine together, Dame Percula and her son and maid all go home to the other end of the stage and Pilate goes to bed.—

Pil. I comaunde þe to come nere, for I will kare to my couche,
Haue in thy handes hendely and heue me fro hyne,
But loke þat þou tene me not with þi tastyng, but tendirly me touche,
Bed. A! sir, yhe whe wele!
Pil. Yha, I haue wette with me wyne.
Yhit helde doune and lappe me even [here],
For I will slelye slepe vnto synne.
Loke þat no man nor no myron of myne
With no noyse be neghand me nere. . . .
Bed. Whe! so sir, slepe ye, and saies nomore.
ll. 133-49.

[81] *Cf.* pp. 152-4.

In the meantime, however, Dame Percula has got to her *sedes,* where she goes to bed.—

Dom. Nowe are we at home, do helpe yf ye may,
For I will make me redye and rayke to my reste.
Anc. Yhe are werie, madame, for-wente of youre way,
Do boune you to bedde, for þat holde I beste.
Fil. Here is a bedde arayed of þe beste.
Dom. Do happe me, and faste hense ye hye.
Anc. Madame, anone all dewly is dressid.
Fil. With no stalkyng nor no striffe be ye stressed.
Dom. Nowe be yhe in pese, both youre carpyng and crye.—ll. 150-8.

After she has gone to rest, her son and, supposedly, the maid lie down and go to sleep; for, when the devil has come to her in a dream and told her, that, if Jesus is unjustly doomed, Pilate and she will be destroyed, she bids the boy get up in a hurry and run to her lord with the news of her dream. The boy complains sorely at being awakened at midnight, promises to go however, but decides to take a nap before doing so. Then the soldiers come forward with their prisoner, awaken Pilate, and the trial, which is not useful for our purpose here, begins.

In this play we have Pilate, Dame Percula, her son, and possibly her maid, all asleep on the stage at the same time. Dame Percula can not have gone off the stage, because the devil immediately comes to her in her dream; her son cannot have left after putting her to sleep, because she bids him get up and carry the news to Pilate; and Pilate cannot have gone, because the soldiers come and awaken him to get his judgment on Christ. Dame Percula may or may not have left the stage after her dream—we do not hear from her any more,—but certainly when the soldiers enter the *platea,* wherever they may have come from—whether from a separate *sedes* or from the dressing-room below, —we have Pilate and his boy asleep on the stage and each in a different *locus.*

And, in addition to the actual fact that these characters were all asleep on the stage at the same time, there is a definite reason why they were each made to go to sleep during the process of action at another *sedes.* The reason for Dame Percula's sleep is evident at a glance: it is that the devil may come to her in a dream; but the reason for the boy's is not, especially since the Dame sends him in great haste to Pilate. According to Mr. Albright's theory there is no solution to this question at all; in fact, the mere presence of two propertied bedroom scenes in the same play is contrary to his theory. But if we allow Pilate's hall and Dame Percula's chamber both on the same pageant-stage,

an easy solution is offered: that, on account of the close proximity of the *sedes* on a necessarily limited stage, the author of the play was compelled to resort to some such expedient as this to make the scene seem as real as possible. Stage curtains were unknown, shift of scenery impossible; and since the two scenes must of necessity be presented close to each other, then the easiest way around this crudity, which the author of this scene seems to have recognized, perhaps unconsciously, was to put each actor to sleep while the other one was playing.

Chester "Lot and Abraham". So far as the stage-directions go, however, the most definite and specific evidence of the actors remaining on the stage and in their separate *sedes* comes from the Chester *Lot and Abraham,*[32] which immediately follows the *Noah's Flood.* The play begins with a prologue by a messenger, who says:

> All lordinges that be heare presente,
> And harcken me with good intente,
> Howe Noye awaie from us he wente,
> And all his companye;
> And Abraham, through Godes grace,
> He is comen into this place,
> And ye will geve us rombe and space
> To tell you of storye.—p. 57.

Then Abraham and Lot come into their places and

[32] *Cf.* Wright's edition, printed for the Shakespeare Society, London, 1843, pp. 57-76.

the stage-direction reads: *Heare Abraham, havinge restored his brother Lote into his owne place, doth firste of al begine the playe.* Abraham now thanks God for the victory over the four heathen kings and vows a tenth of all the spoil received from the fight. Then occurs the stage-direction: *Heare Lote, torninge hym to his brother Abraham, dothe saye.* . . . There is no need for further analysis of this play. Lot in "his owne place" "torninge hym to his brother Abraham" is sufficient to show the custom of each actor keeping his own *sedes*.

Other Illustrations. In like manner, numerous other examples of an actor's remaining on the stage when not in action may be noted at much less length. In the York *Purification* cited above the scene in the temple (l. 339) is made to wait while an angel tells Simeon of Christ's presence there (ll. 340-53). Likewise, Simeon in the Chester *Purification* is bidden to sit *expectans consolationem* (l. 120) while Mary and Joseph are deciding the question of coming to the temple. And in the *Nativity* play of the same cycle Joseph must have been in his *sedes* and waiting for Mary before her arrival from Elizabeth's house (l. 120). And, finally, in the Coventry shearmen and tailors' play Mary must have remained in her *locus* while Joseph wandered away from home (ll. 136-55). The author does not claim, of course, that an actor who kept his seat once remained in it always, nor

that all actors kept their *sedes* all the time, but that the convention of the players remaining on the stage when not in action was a common one.

Summary. In conclusion, then, and by way of summarizing some of the principles of Corpus Christi staging, the author seems justified in saying: (1) that the circumstances under which the processional plays developed and continued to be presented resulted in many incongruities; (2) that one of these incongruous elements was the use of the pageant-*sedes;* (3) that the attempt which has been made in recent years to regard the pageant-wagon as the mere equivalent of a *sedes* or a *locus,* rather than as a stage, is founded on statements and records which have been misinterpreted; (4) that a careful examination of the plays of the processional cycles proves conclusively that they cannot have been staged according to this theory; and (5) that they show undoubted evidence on the contrary of simultaneous scenery and multiple representation, with the pageant-car as a stage rather than as a *sedes.*

VI

CONVENTIONS OF THE CORPUS CHRISTI STAGE

Introductory. In the preceding chapter something has been shown of the use of simultaneous scenery on the Corpus Christi stage. That is to say, when the action of a play required different scenes, these scenes were located on pulpits, or *sedes,* set on the stage and raised somewhat above it, a separate *sedes* being employed for each place or house. Bethlehem, the temple at Jerusalem, and Simeon's home were all near to each other on the same platform, even though in the actual world they might be miles apart. The consciousness of the audience, however, kept these places separate and distinct, and for all the purposes of the dramatist these *sedes* sufficed to give a semblance of reality to the chief feature of the plays, the action. Scenery in the modern sense was unknown and undesired, since the purpose of the plays was not to make men see where an event in biblical history had happened, but to make them know intellectually and feel emo-

tionally what had occurred. The audience was not especially interested in the places or the scenery centering around Christ's life, but rather in the representation of his passion, his suffering, and his death.

Symbolism. And yet, in order to present the events of the biblical narrative with any degree of clearness, a certain kind or amount of scenery was necessary. Heaven and hell, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Calvary and the Mount of Olives must all be represented and yet be kept distinct from each other; and the only way to accomplish this, as the fifteenth and sixteenth century dramatists saw it, was through a continuation of the symbolic stage of the church and the cathedral, with one end of the platform for Bethlehem, the other for Jerusalem. Such a system of staging is in direct contradiction to the twentieth-century ideal of complete illusion in a staged scene, and to us of to-day seems incongruous in the extreme, even absurd, since it is evident that no stage picture could have been attempted at all. And yet these elementary attempts at scenery seem to have been perfectly appropriate to the medieval mind. Medieval thought reveled in symbolism, and any symbolical technique in the drama was therefore in perfect conformity to the medieval habit of thinking. There was no intention to make heaven and earth seem actually on the upper and lower stages; there was only an attempt to furnish the audience with symbols of these two

worlds. The customary habits of imagination on the part of the audience did the rest. Likewise, the green eyes, the gaping jaws, and the fiery smoke issuing from the dragon's head were supposed to be, not so much a representation as a symbol, of hell. And, similarly, the whole stage was incongruous but symbolical; but, with the interest of the audience centered in the action rather than in the scenery, this system of staging was entirely adequate for successful representation.

Propertied "Plateae". Another question presents itself, however: If the representation of the temple in Jerusalem at one end of the stage and the home of Joseph at the other was symbolical, was the passage in between, the *platea,* the country, necessarily completely bare of scenery? Mr. Albright, in consequence of his theory that the pageant-wagon was only one of the *sedes* and that the *platea* was a fixed scaffold in the street, or else the street itself, finds himself driven to the inference that the *platea* was entirely bare.[1] But if the present writer has been able to interpret the plays and the guild account-books correctly, not only were both *platea* and *sedes* situated on the pageant-wagon, but the *platea,* as well as the *sedes,* was furnished with symbolical properties.

Unlocated Elizabethan Scenes. Mr. G. F. Reynolds in an admirably sane and convincing paper on *"Trees" on the Stage of Shakespeare*

[1] *A Typical Shakesperian Stage,* p. iv.

has shown that forests, wildernesses, and waste places generally were customarily represented on the Elizabethan stage by trees, only two or three being required. Mr. Reynolds says: "It [a forest] was, of course, not so difficult to arrange as a forest-setting similarly constituted would be upon our modern stage. A few trees—one, two, three, five—were enough, for the convention of 'symbolic' scenery, by which one property suggested many, saved the Elizabethans much expense and trouble. It is therefore quite unnecessary to suppose that in a wood scene the 'trees' covered any large part of the stage. *Orlando Furioso,* with half its action laid in the woods, must have had some open space for the other half. No one, indeed, could imagine the whole stage covered with trees. Two or three would have been quite sufficient."[2] These trees, Mr. Reynolds shows, were also used in the representation of the usual unlocated scenes; that is, scenes that were not assigned to any definite place but which might have occurred anywhere. And in another paper[3] Mr. Reynolds has proved with equal conclusiveness that other properties than trees were to be found in these unlocated scenes, properties which, though present because needed in some other scene, were often really incongruous to the scene in progress and, consequently, were necessarily thought of as absent.

[2] *Modern Philology,* v. 162.

[3] *Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, Modern Philology,* June, 1905.

Hegge Plays. Likewise, it may be shown very easily that trees were uesd on the *platea* of the contemporary non-processional stage. For instance, in that part of the Hegge plays which represents the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, after they have started on their journey, Mary stops and asks:

Maria. A! my swete husbond, wolde ȝe telle to me,
What tre is ȝon standynge upon ȝon hylle?
Josephe. fforsothe, Mary, it is clepyd a chery tre;
In tyme of ȝere ȝe myght ffede ȝow theron ȝour ffylle.
Maria. Turne ageyn, husbond, and behold ȝon tre,
How that it blomyght now so swetly.
Joseph. Cum on, Mary, that we worn at ȝon cyté;
Or ellys we may be blamyd, I telle ȝow lythly.
Maria. Now, my spowse, I pray ȝow to behold,
How the cheryes growyn upon ȝon tre;
ffor to have therof ryght ffayn I wold,
And it plesyd ȝow to labore so meche for me.[4]

Mary ends by getting her cherries, and the pair go on into the city.

[4] Halliwell, *Ludus Coventriæ*, pp. 145-6.

The incident, as may be seen, is unlocated; it occurred somewhere, anywhere between Jerusalem and Bethlehem; and yet a tree of some sort must have been on the *platea;* for the scene could not have been given without it.

Likewise, later in the same play, in the part representing the adoration of the Magi, we have what seems to be this same tree used to symbolize a country scene again. Herod is boasting in his court and is sending out his steward to learn of any trouble in the land.—

[*Herod.*] Styward bolde,
Walke thou on mowlde,
And wysely beholde
Alle abowte;
Iff any thynge
Shuld greve the kynge,
Brynge me tydydge [*sic*],
If there be ony dowte.
Senescallus. Lord, kynge in crowne,
I go fro towne,
By bankys browne
I wylle abyde;
And with erys lyste,
Est and west,
If any geste
On grownde gynnyth glyde.

Tunc ibit senescallus et obviabit
tribus regibus et dicit eis

Kynges iij.,
Undyr this tre,
In this countré
Why wylle ȝe abyde?[5]

The Hegge plays, one ought possibly to be reminded, were not originally cut into the short, separate scenes as given by Halliwell, but the entire cycle was intended for presentation, apparently, in three successive days, or years. Hence the play of which this forms a part is to be taken as the same as the preceding one. So we apparently have the same tree for the country scene. And here again, it is noticeable, the scene is specifically in the country, anywhere, and hence unlocated; and the symbol of the country seems unquestionably to be this cherry tree.

If, then, as Mr. Reynolds has conclusively shown, properties were used in unlocated scenes on the Elizabethan stage, and if they were required for similar scenes on the *plateae* of the non-processional stage, does it not seem probable that such a convention might well have existed on the Corpus Christi stage? And since the located scenes on the Corpus Christi stage were propertied and symbolically represented, does it not seem that we have double reasons for expecting a similar propertied, symbolical representation of the unlocated scenes in the same plays? The answer cannot be otherwise than in the affirmative.

[5] *Loc. cit.*, p. 164.

York "Joseph's Trouble". But, to turn from probabilities to facts, let us look at one or two of the Corpus Christi plays in which a propertied *platea* was actually needed. The York *Joseph's Trouble about Mary* is one of these. In this play, when Joseph finds his wife with child, he leaves her and goes off into the wilderness. And while wandering he falls into a monologue:—

> *Jos.* Nowe, lord God! þat all þing may
> At thine owne will bothe do and dresse,
> Wisse me now som redy way
> To walk here in þis wildirnesse.—ll. 237-40.

Then he falls asleep, and an angel tells him to return to his wife.—

> *Ang.* Waken, Joseph! and take bettir kepe
> To Marie, þat is þi felawe fest.
> *Jos.* A! I am full werie, lefe late me slepe,
> For-wandered and walked in þis forest.
> —ll. 247-50.

In this case we need some sort of representation of a wilderness for a proper understanding of the scene; and yet the scene, because of its being unlocated, must have been presented on the *platea*.

In like manner, in the corresponding play at Coventry, the weavers' pageant, when Joseph "gothe from Mare", he says:

[*Josoff.*] I wandur abowt myself alone,
Turtulis or dowis can I non see. . . .
Lord, *benedissete!* Whatt make I here
Among these heggis myself alone?
For-were I ma no lengur stond;
These buskis the teyre me on eyuere syde.
—ll. 506-17.

How are we to suppose that this field scene was presented? Is it likely that the *platea* was bare and the wilderness only supposed to be there? Or is it more probable that a small bush or so, as on the Elizabethan stage, was used to symbolize this country scene?

Paradise. A discussion of paradise does not properly belong here among the unlocated scenes, but, before going to the concluding and conclusive argument for the use of trees in country scenes, it may be well to look for a moment at a slight bit of evidence, the contemporary method of representing paradise scenes, which may cast some light on the problem before us.

In the later Cornish *Creation of the World* the stage-directions state that paradise shall be indicated on the stage by having "ii fayre trees in yt", a "fowntaine", and some "fyne flowers". Note that only two trees are to be used in symbolizing paradise. At Norwich the grocers seem to have had only a single tree to represent their paradise scene.[6] And at Beverley, if we may trust the list

[6] Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, p. xxxii.

of what seem to have been all the properties for the *Paradise* play, we find paradise symbolized by a single tree. In 1391, the entry from Beverley states, all the properties were handed over to one "John of Erghes, hayrer", who promised "to redeliver to the twelve Keepers of the town for the time being, at the end of his life, all necessaries which he has belonging to the said play under penalty of 20*s*., viz., one car ('karre'), eight hasps ('hespis'), eighteen staples ('stapils'), two visors ('visers'), two angels' wings ('winges angeli'), one pine pole ('fir sparr'), one serpent ('worme'), two pairs of linen boots, two pairs of shirts, one sword".[1] The car was, presumably, the pageant-car itself; the hasps and the staples were to fasten the gate of paradise when Adam and Eve were driven out; the visors, two pairs of shirts, and the linen boots were for them; the angel wore the wings and carried the sword to keep them out; the 'worme' was Satan's garb; and the 'fir sparr' was very probably decorated for the forbidden tree and used to symbolize paradise.

As said above, a discussion of the method of representing paradise does not strictly belong here, but the fact that one or two trees symbolized the scenery in paradise shows clearly that one or two trees or bushes might just as well have symbolized the wilderness or the country scenes at York and Coventry.

[1] *Hist. MSS Comm., Beverley MSS*, p. 66.

The Chester "Purification". All the scenes so far noted require some sort of forest, or country, or garden scenery for a proper presentation and understanding of the play. The incidents could not have been clearly understood without such symbols, even in the unscenic Corpus Christi days. But in the Chester smiths' *Purification* play we have the use of trees for a country scene when there were none actually needed in the play. In the smiths' accounts for 1554 the following entry is found:

1554. We gave for an apeyll tree to Ric. Belfounder, vid.; For another apell tre to Ric. Hankey, iiiid.; For Ropes, nelles, pyns, and thred, xd.; We gave to the porters of the Caryeg, iis.[8]

An examination of the smiths' *Purification,* however, shows that no possible use could have been made of these trees except to represent the country between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. There are only two definitely located places in the play, the temple and Joseph's home, the one at Bethlehem, the other at Jerusalem; and yet we have two trees bought and paid for by the company for use in the play. A cherry tree, probably not more than one, was needed to symbolize a country scene in the Hegge plays, as we have seen, and one or two trees were often used in unlocated scenes on the almost contemporary Elizabethan stage to symbolize the

[8] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns,* p. 305 *n.*

country. What more probable use, then, could be made of the two trees bought by the smiths in 1554 than for the unlocated country scene in their play of the *Purification?*

Coventry "Harrowing of Hell". But there is yet another use of an apple tree which has so far been unexplained. Sharp makes the following statement in his *Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries:*

> Amongst the various items of Pageant expenditure by this Company [the cappers, who represented the events from the harrowing of hell through the *Peregrinus* play] are the following:—
>
> Item pd for a pece of tymber for an Apeltrie . ijs iiijd
> Item pd for ij cloutes a clasp & other yron worke about þe Apeltre . . . . . xijd
>
> which at first sight might lead to a conjecture that the history of *the Fall* was sometimes exhibited by them; but the ensuing stage direction and extract from the same subject in the Ludus Coventriæ, will shew that Adam and Eve, though not particularized in the list of performers in the Cappers' Pageant (in consequence probably of these short and subordinate parts being taken by persons who had played other characters in an earlier portion of the Pageant) were nevertheless indispensable requisites, and the introduction of this appropriate and distinguishing symbol is thus readily accounted for.
>
> "Tunc dormyent milites & ueniet Anima Christi de inferno cum Adam et Euam. Abraham John baptist & Alijs.

Anima Christi. Come forthe Adam & Eue wt the
And all my fryndys þt. her in be
to paradys come forthe wt. me
In blysse for to dwelle
þe fende of helle þt is ȝor ffoo
he xal be wrappyd & woundy' in woo
Fro wo to welthe now xul ȝe go
Wt. myrthe evyr mor to melle.[9]

But such an interpretation of the use of the "Apeltrie" is exceedingly lame, especially when we notice that clouts and a clamp were bought to hold the tree in place on the stage. For if the tree were to symbolize Adam and Eve, which is itself very improbable, it would naturally be carried with them when they went out of hell, which could not have been done with the tree clamped to the floor of the stage.

On the contrary, there is possible another and a far more likely use for the tree. The account given by Sharp is not dated, but it is noticeable that the next entry that he mentions is "the payment of 13d. in 1540 'for the matter of þe castell of emaus'". But this scene involving the castle of Emmaus is the well-known *Peregrinus* play, in which Christ appears to Luke and Cleophas on the road to Emmaus. Hence a country scene is needed, and from the mere matter of the relative arrangement of the material as given in Sharp it would seem that the tree must have been used for this incident

[9] p. 46.

in the *Peregrinus* part of the play. We have not yet found the Coventry cappers' play, of course, but in all the other cycles from Chester, Wakefield, York, and in the so-called *Ludus Coventriæ*, the *Peregrinus* play begins with the country scene on the road to the castle of Emmaus. Hence it seems fair to infer that this "Apeltrie" was intended to be used on the *platea* as a symbol of the country near *Emmaus*.

Unlocated Scenes. Such a theory as this of properties in the unlocated scenes does not seem improbable or unreal. On the contrary, it seems that some such staging as this would be the natural thing. If the located scenes were symbolically represented and decorated, why should the unlocated ones, simply because they were on the *platea*, stand bare of all ornamentation? The author is not aware of any further examples of trees specifically mentioned in unlocated scenes, but numerous other instances are to be found of properties on the *platea*. One or two citations will perhaps suffice.

Towneley "Jacob". The Towneley *Jacob* concerns itself with the meeting of Jacob and Esau, and begins with Jacob on the way home and praying God to be his guide "in the right way to mesopotameam". Then he says:

> The son is downe, what is best?
> her purpose I all nyght to rest;
> Vnder my hede this ston shall ly;
> A nyghtis rest take will I.—ll. 9-12.

God appears to him in his sleep and blesses him, and he awakes and sets up the stone in praise of God.—

> lord, how dredfull is this stede!
> Ther I layde downe my hede,
> In godis lovyng I rayse this stone,
> And oyll wil I putt theron.—ll. 41-44.

Here then we have a stone, which could not have been an imaginary one, used in a scene that was supposed to occur anywhere between Padan-aran and Mesopotamia. This scene was unlocated, too, and yet had at least one property in it.

In the same way the burning bush in the York and Towneley *Children of Israel* plays must have been on the *platea;* in the *Second Shepherds' Play* at Wakefield there must have been a real representation of sheep, so that Mak might steal one and run away; and in the *Offering of the Magi* at Wakefield a litter of some kind was on the *platea* between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. This last is so clearly a use of a property in an unlocated scene that it may be well to explain it a little more fully. The three Magi have just come from making their offerings at Bethlehem:—

> *primus rex.* A, lordyngys dere! the sothe to say,
> we haue made a good Iornay; . . .

ijus rex. lordyngys, we haue traueld lang,
And restyd haue we lytyll emang,
ffor-thi I red now, or we gang,
with all oure mayn
et vs fownde a slepe to fang;
Then were I fayn;
ffor in greatt stowres we haue ben sted.
lo, here a lytter redy cled.
iijus rex. I loue my lord! we haue well sped,
To rest with wyn;
lordyngys, syn we shall go to bed,
ye shall begyn.—ll. 577-594.

Here we have a litter, an entirely incongruous property, on the road between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The reason for its presence is entirely clear: the Magi could not lie down by the roadside and see visions as the ordinary actor could; their clothes were too costly and could not be soiled with dirt and dust; so a litter had to be prepared, incongruous as it was, on which they might rest while hearing the angel tell them not to go back to Herod.

Summary. Here then are the facts. The Elizabethan theatre and the non-processional stages, both of which were contemporary with the Corpus Christi plays, used trees, one or two, to represent forests and the country in unlocated scenes, and the Elizabethan stage used many other heavy properties in unlocated scenes, properties which were not only incongruous, but often impeding to

the action of the play. There is no reason for believing this incongruous convention an innovation on the part of the Elizabethans. Likewise, on the Corpus Christi stage many scenes are to be found which are unlocated and yet which demand, absolutely necessitate, trees and other properties on the *platea;* and there are unlocated country scenes in which trees are not absolutely needed, but for which the guild account-books seem to show that trees were bought. Then, since symbolism was a characteristic of the Corpus Christi stage, since the regular *sedes* were decorated to symbolize certain places, since the Garden of Eden scenes were symbolized by one or two trees, since trees and other properties were used in unlocated scenes on the Elizabethan stage, since trees and other properties were necessitated in unlocated scenes on the Corpus Christi stage, and since trees were bought for plays in which we can find no other use than for unlocated country scenes, it seems conclusive that the *platea* as well as the *sedes* on the Corpus Christi stage was sometimes decorated, that the *platea* decorations were symbolical like the others, and that in country scenes trees were a part of the symbolical decorations.

Symbolical Distance. The symbolism, however, did not cease here. Just as definite houses and temples were symbolized by the *sedes,* so by means of a similar exercise of the imagination great distances and large spaces were symbolized by these

country scenes on the *platea,* or, indeed, by the mere *platea* itself. In the York *Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac,* for instance, the distance from Abraham's home to the Land of Vision is so great that it will take three days to make the journey; and yet the party arrive there in the time taken to repeat thirty-five lines. Similarly, in the Coventry shearmen and tailors' pageant Joseph speaks of the distance between Nazareth and Bethlehem as being three leagues; and yet he arrives in twelve lines' time.

And in the Chester *Resurrection,* when the three Maries have visited the tomb of Christ, the stage-direction states: *Tunc discedent et paulisper circumambulabunt, et tunc obvient discipulis Petro et Johanni.* And after the disciples have been informed of the supposed theft of Christ's body, Peter says:

> Abyde, brother, sweete John,
> Leste we meete with anye fonne;
> But nowe I se no other wonne,
> To ronne I will assaye.
> *Tunc ambo simul concurrent, sed Johannes procurret citius Petro, et non intrant sepulchrum.*

These *plateae,* then, it should be remembered, though representing unlocated scenes and being perhaps often undecorated, were symbolical of great

distances and were just as important in the stage presentation as were the *sedes*.

Symbolical Numbers. Another notable symbolic convention on the Corpus Christi stage was that of making a few persons represent many. This custom would probably not seem so absurd to us of to-day if it had not been carried to such an extreme length at the time. For example, in the Chester *Slaughter of the Innocents* only two children are actually represented as slain on the stage, whereas Herod tells the two soldiers they will have "a thowsand and yet moe" to kill. And in the Wakefield *Herod the Great,* which corresponds to the Chester *Slaughter of the Innocents,* only three children are killed by as many soldiers, who return to Herod and boast of having slain many thousands.—

> We haue mayde rydyng thrugh outt Iure:
> well wytt ye oone thyng that mordered haue we
> Many thowsandys.—ll. 417-19.

And a little later Herod states that the number slain was 144,000.—

> A hundreth thowsand, I watt and fourty ar slayn,
> And four thowsand; ther-at me aght to be fayn.—ll. 487-8.

Likewise two demons represent the host of fallen angels in the Towneley *Creation and Fall* and two

persons the entire tribe of Israel in the subsequent *Pharaoh* play. And at Chester three saved souls and six damned ones represented all the world come to judgment in the *Doomsday* play, while at York there were only two of each kind.

Time Symbolism. In both of the preceding conventions, where a distance of a few feet is used to represent as many miles and where one person may symbolize a hundred or a thousand, the usage would seem to have been due, partly at least, to the necessary limitations of space on the meagre Corpus Christi stage; but in the next convention, time symbolism, the usage can be attributed only to a lack of realization on the part of the authors of the requirements and limitations of their stages. In the Chester *Creation,* for instance, we can forgive the dramatist for allowing an upper stage to represent heaven and a lower one paradise and the world at large, since each *sedes* is kept distinct and separate and there seems a reason for the methods employed, but it seems the height of crudity and incongruity to represent the creation of Adam and Eve, the expulsion from the garden of Eden, and Cain and Abel at the age of "XXX yeare", all within the compass of one continuous scene. To us of to-day the custom would seem more reasonable if there were any break in the scenes to indicate the passage of time; but there is none.

In the same way it is difficult for us of to-day to conceive of the Chester dramatist's daring in repre-

senting the forty days in the wilderness by a single continuous scene of perhaps ten minutes length. The same crudity, however, is to be found in the plays of all the cycles. In the Wakefield *Noah and the Ark,* for instance, a space of "thre hundreth dayes and fyfty" is supposed to elapse within the time taken to quote forty-five lines, and in the corresponding play of the York cycle Noah says, "A hundereth wyntres away is wente, sen I began þis werk", when the audience in almost as many seconds has lived through the whole performance. And at Chester the incongruity is even more carefully presented. Here Noah says,

> A 100 wynters and 20
> this shipp making taried haue I,

where the audience has sat through the whole performance and seen that the ark has not been erected on the stage at all, but that he has only been tinkering with a ready-built boat, pretending he was making it.[10] The stage-direction now reads: *Then*

[10] Perhaps attention may be called here to the corresponding York play, where the ark may have been put together by Noah in the presence of the audience. Something of his method is indicated by his measuring his board, hewing it even, and joining it to the other parts of the boat "with a gynn", that is, a catch. In other words, the various parts of the ark were all made ready ahead of time and fixed with catches so that the actor must merely lay the boards together and by means of catches, "gynns", put the ark together in a few minutes. And no doubt at the rehearsals one of the chief things this actor had to be sure of was that of being able to put these parts together

Noah shall enter the ark, and his family shall name and recite all the animals whose pictures are drawn on the boards. And after each one has spoken his part he shall go into the ark, the wife of Noah excepted. And the animals depicted must agree with the names given them. Then a little further on the direction is given: *Then Noah shall shut the window of the ark and for a little while in the house they shall sing the psalm,* " Save mee o God ". *And opening the window and looking about,*[11] Noah shall say, " Now 40 days are fullie gone ", *etc.* He even emphasizes his forty days by saying they are " fullie " gone. Such crudities are commonly included among the symbolical elements in the Corpus Christi drama, but to the present writer, after a rather extended study of the plays, they seem rather to indicate ignorance of the possibilities and limitations of the processional pageants. These crudities, however, are their worst; and from these we may continue looking at some of their other conventions, comic, symbolic, and otherwise.

Anachronisms. Along with their crudities it may not be uninteresting to note some of the

easily. Then when the play was over, and while the pageant was moving to the next station, Noah busied himself with taking down the ark he had just put up, arranging the boards carefully in their places, and getting ready to erect the ark again at the next station. If this was the case, however, it was the exception rather than the rule; for the general custom, as at Chester, was to bring a ready-made ark and only seem to work on it.

[11] The author's translation from the Latin following ll. 160 and 256.

anachronisms so common in these plays. It is rather comic, for instance, to find Noah's wife at Chester swearing "Be Christe!" and old Noah himself "by Sante John!" In the Wakefield *Killing of Abel,* too, Cain has a servant, a *garcio,* whom he orders about with considerable fierceness; but it never seems to have occurred to the author of the play that this boy, historically, must have been a very near relative of Cain's. There are also bailies, who, Cain fears, will catch him if they hear of his murder of Abel. And a little later in the same cycle we find Pharaoh recommending prayer to Mahowne, Augustus Caesar and Pilate swearing by Mahowne, Herod calling him a saint; Caiaphas singing mass, and Pilate bribing his soldiers with English money, £10,000, to say that "Ten thowsand men of good aray" came and stole the body of Jesus away from them. Likewise, in none of the cycles does it appear to have been out of place, for instance in the Wakefield *Prophet* play, to make Moses, David, Daniel, and probably others, all appear on the same stage together.[12] The whole object seems to have been to represent the scenes as the dramatist saw them, and it seems never to have occurred to the players that their view might be anachronistic in any way whatever.

Rotation Speeches. A further evidence of the crudity of the Corpus Christi stage may be seen in

[12] The subject of anachronisms in costuming will be discussed later, p. 219.

the rotation speeches of the actors. In other words, when there were several characters in a scene and all were on the stage at once, it was the rule rather than the exception that each actor should speak in regular order, no matter whether his speech was necessary to the thought or the action or not. An excellent illustration of this convention is to be seen in the seventh Chester play, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, where the three shepherds and the boy talk together. Before the boy comes on the stage the rotation is regularly: first shepherd, second shepherd, third shepherd, first shepherd, second shepherd, third shepherd, and so on; but after the boy enters he breaks into the conversation and the rotation now becomes: first shepherd, second shepherd, third shepherd, boy, *etc.* Nor is this crude stiff convention common to the Chester plays only; it is to be found in those of all the cycles.

Monologues. Another convention equally crude is to be found in the constant use of the monologue. This usage seems to have been for various purposes: as an aid to the scenery, to give the setting of the play, to tell its purpose, and sometimes for the sole reason of theological moralizing. Very seldom does it seem like the natural and unforced soliloquy that a player would naturally think to himself. On the contrary, it usually has all the ear-marks of didacticism, of being composed for the enlightenment of the audience along some particular line. John the Baptist's soliloquy at the

beginning of the York *Baptism of Jesus* is such a one, its purpose being not only to give the setting of the play, but to preach the need of baptism and a holy life. And it is noticeable in this preliminary speech of John the Baptist's that he soon forgets he is an impersonator of the forerunner of Christ; he becomes a preacher of the fourteenth century, giving up his part as an actor for the moment and addressing himself to "bothe wiffe and man" in the audience before him, in a purposed attempt to make them "be clene in levyng".

Direct Address to the Audience. This use of the direct address always weakens the dramatic force of the play, since it throws the listener suddenly from the world of fancy to that of reality; but it is found very commonly among the Corpus Christi plays. Usually it is in the form of an exhortation to the audience, as in the case of John the Baptist's sermon; but often it takes the form of a prayer in which the audience is addressed directly and is warned of the wrath to come. On the other hand, its purpose is often purely structural, as a sort of prologue or epilogue to the play. The demon who comes to carry off Herod's soul to hell in the Chester *Slaughter of the Innocents* is a good example of the address of warning. He addresses himself to the audience in general and to all tapsters in particular:—

> No more shall you, Tapstars, by my lewty,
> that fills ther measures falcly,

shall bear this lord Company;
The gett none other grace.
I will bringe this [Herod's body] into woe,
And come agayne and fetch moe,
as fast as ever I may goe.
farewell and haue good day!—ll. 449-456.

Direct addresses to the audiences at the close of plays, good-byes so to speak, were usually spoken by one of the actors, though occasionally the parts were given to regular epilogues, as in the Chester *Balaam and Balak*, or the Brome *Abraham and Isaac*. When such addresses came at the beginning of the scenes they were usually spoken by the principal actor and served a treble purpose, to present the actor, to furnish the setting, and to tell the purpose of the play. In this way Abraham comes in at the beginning of the Wakefield play of that name and for a space of fifty lines soliloquizes on Adam's sin, Cain's crime, Noah and Lot, and, finally, on himself, his age, *etc.* And by the time his monologue is finished he has given us the whole setting and purpose of the play and has introduced himself, the main actor. And in the *Temptation of Jesus* at York the part of the Devil in the first fifty lines is plainly to give the setting and the *motif* of the play, though the Devil in this case does not happen to be the main actor.

Prayers. Another similar device for opening the play and for giving the setting, *etc.* was in the

use of formal prayers at the beginning of scenes. Simeon's opening speech in the Chester *Purification* is one instance of this convention, and Noah's at the beginning of the Wakefield *Noah and the Ark* another. In the latter, Noah begins by praising God for his work of creation, by recalling the creation of the angels, the fall of Lucifer, and the creation of Adam and Eve and their fall. By this time, however, he has forgotten that he is praying to God and now speaks of Him in the third person. He tells how everybody now living sins boldly, how he dreads God's vengeance, and how he himself is growing old; then he falls back into his original prayer to God, calling on him for mercy, and so ends his praying. But it is evident that the whole has been given purely for the sake of introducing the play and the principal actor.

Actors Kneeling in Prayer. It would be interesting to know whether Noah and the other actors in these prayer incidents were regularly on their knees or not. The stage-directions give no evidence in these cases, but it is probable that they were, since in other instances the players are definitely bidden to kneel. For example, in the Chester *Adoration of the Magi*, when the three kings pray for the fulfillment of Balaam's prophecy of a Savior to come, the direction states: *Tunc Reges iterum genua flectunt.*[13] Yet in the first prayer no direction at all has been given for the

[13] Deimling, *Chester Plays*, p. 163.

kneeling of the actors. And in the *Emission of the Holy Ghost* in the same cycle a similar direction is given to the apostles: *Tunc omnes apostoli genu flectent.*[14] Such examples, no matter how many might be given, would not prove the usage a universal one, but they show at least that the custom of actors kneeling in prayer on the stage was possibly a common one.

Prologue. Another method still of introducing a scene or play was through the usual prologue so well known to audiences in later Elizabethan days. The Chester barbers in their play of *Abraham and Melchisedech and Lot* had a prologue in the guise of a *nuntius* named " Gobet on the grene ". Apparently he called the audience to order, announced the play and its purpose, and retired as Abraham came forward. In the Towneley *Killing of Abel* a *Garcio* served as the prologue and introduced the audience to his master Cain; and in the *Herod the Great* of the same cycle the prologue was a *nuncius,* who performed the same office for his master Herod and gave at the same time the setting of the play. And at Norwich in the *Fall of Man* scene the prologue had two different speeches to say, one to be used when no pageants preceded that scene and another when the customary *Creation and Fall* play went first. The part seems to have been regarded as of minor importance, however, since the speaker's fee for his serv-

[14] Wright, *Chester Plays,* p. 124.

ices was small in proportion to what the better actors received. At Coventry Sharp notes *2d.* "paid to jorge loe for spekynge þe prologe" and *4d.* on two other occasions.

Music with the Plays. Along with the prologues and epilogues may be noted the employment of professional minstrels, who are often bidden to strike up at the conclusion or in the midst of the scenes. There is no evidence of any regular "musical accompaniment to the dialogue of the existing plays, which was spoken, and not, like that of their liturgical forerunners, chanted".[15] Music, however, seems to have been a frequent accompaniment and to have been employed with no little dramatic effect in all the plays, its function being to heighten the action and to add a touch of dramatic seriousness to the exalted portions. For example, in the Chester drapers' *Creation and Fall* the stage-directions require the minstrels to play when God brings Adam into Paradise, while He is talking to the guilty pair after they have eaten of the forbidden fruit, while they are being driven out of Eden, and during Adam's following lament. It is noticeable in all these instances that the addition of the music is made at just the dramatic moment and when the softened strains from the instruments would tend to throw a glamor of seriousness over the crucial action. A very similar use of the violin and other stringed instruments is to be seen in the drama of to-day.

[15] Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 140.

Songs and Antiphons. Not always, however, was the music limited to the instrumental entirely. On the contrary, vocal selections were given with equal frequency, and choristers from the neighboring churches engaged to sing them. Numerous entries of payments to the "clarkys for syngyng" are to be found from time to time in the guild accounts, and their songs and antiphons seem to have been introduced and used much in the same way as the instrumental selections. Oftentimes they were newly written for the occasion and were sung by the actors, assisted at times by outsiders, at some special point in the play. One of the most beautiful and effective of these must have been the lullaby of the two mothers in the pageant of the shearmen and tailors at Coventry. This is the one introduced into the play just before the killing of the children. Herod has ordered the slaughter of all children under two years of age; Mary and Joseph have escaped into Egypt with their child; and the two mothers come in singing:—

Lully, lulla, thow littell tine child,
By by, lully lullay, thow littell tyne child,
By by, lully lullay!
O sisters too,
How may we do
For to preserve this day
This pore yongling
For whom we do singe
By by, lully lullay?

Herod, the king,
In his raging,
Chargid he hath this day
His men of might
In his owne sight
All yonge children to slay,—

That wo is me,
Pore child, for thee,
And ever morne and may
For thi parting
Nether say nor singe,
By by, lully lullay.[16]

One can imagine how effective this song must have been, with the slaughter of the two children to come next. It must have been a late addition, however, as were the others in this and the weavers' plays. All of them smack of the Elizabethan days and are in striking contrast to the soberer ritualistic antiphons more frequent in the other cycles. The songs of the angel before and after the annunciation to Mary in the York spicers' scene is an example of the usual antiphonal music in these plays. The *Dignus Dei* noted in the margin of the Chester *Fall of Lucifer,* [17] the *Gloria in Excelsis* sung by the angels in the Coventry and Chester plays of the *Adoration of the Shepherds,*[18] and numerous other

[16] Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays,* p. 32.
[17] Deimling, *Chester Plays,* p. 12 *n.*
[18] Deimling, *Chester Plays,* p. 147; Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays,* p. 9.

such responses scattered at intervals through the plays were evidently taken from the offices of the church; and one would like to think that all the sequences sung by the choir boys in the plays were of the same origin, though a careful examination of the responses shows that this was not so. Oftentimes they came directly from the offices of the church, but almost as frequently they seem to be only faint echoes of musical and biblical themes well known in the church services.[19] They were rendered by singers from the neighboring monasteries and cathedrals, even though these choristers had no further connection with the plays. A note in the Chester *Adoration of the Shepherds* directs: *Tunc omnes pastores cum aliis adiuvantibus cantabunt hilare carmen.* And numerous entries of payments to church choristers for aiding in the plays are to be found from time to time in the guild account-books.

Non-Speaking Characters. Where the choristers and musicians sat and how they were regarded in the scenes it seems impossible to tell. In some cases they seem to have been one and the same with the angels, and as such would probably sit on the upper stage of the processional pageant-wagons; but where they were outside characters entirely, and, as at Chester, merely aiding the angels in their songs, it seems impossible to say what disposition was made of them when not sing-

[19] Smith, *York Plays*, p. 525.

ing. The same problem arises with regard to other non-speaking characters in the scenes. In the Towneley *Jacob,* for instance, there were evidently characters in the play who did not speak; for in the MS as it has come down to us Jacob in going to meet Esau divides his household into three divisions, putting Rachel, Joseph, and Benjamin in the last division, himself bringing up the rear. Joseph and Benjamin never speak, however: and Esua addresses his men, bidding them hold their hands and refrain from fighting; yet they never reply in any way nor give any evidence of their presence on the stage.

Exits. On the contrary, it may be possible that these singers and silent characters boldly and openly walked off the stage when not needed in the scenes, and on when wanted, and that they were loafing through the audience and being eyed by every small boy in the crowd when not engaged in the action. Almost no evidence at all is to be had from the MSS of the processional plays, but it would seem that some much arrangement as this might well be implied from the speech of the epilogue after the killing of the children in the Digby *Slaughter of the Innocents:*—

> wherfor now, ye virgynes, er we go hens,
> with all your cumpany, you goodly avaunce,
> Also ye menstralles doth your diligens,
> A-fore our departyng geve vs a daunce.—ll. 563-66.

From this one might infer that the dancers and the musicians on the stationary stage were regarded as entirely separate from the play and that they now came forward, possibly from somewhere in the crowd, to entertain the audience for a few moments before it dispersed. And it may be that some such disposition as this was made of the regular players on the processional stage. We have seen above that actors very often kept their seats in their respective stages when not occupied in a scene, but it is also true that they frequently left the stage altogether. In the Coventry pageant of the *Nativity and Slaughter of the Innocents,* after the annunciation to Mary by the angel, we have the stage-direction, *Here the angell departyth, and Joseff cumyth in,* indicating plainly that Gabriel has gone off the stage entirely. And so later the direction states that *Mare and Josoff goth awey cleyne.* In such cases, if there were a lower platform used as a dressing room, these actors might easily exit there, but in those pageants where the upper stage was used as heaven and the lower one for earth, it seems that players must of necessity have gone either among the audience or else under the wagon.

Means of Exit. These exits were apparently made by means of ladders. At least in the Coventry drapers' accounts for the production of their *Doomsday* play we have notices of payments for a ladder and for "fetchyng and kepyng".[20] In the

[20] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries,* p. 74.

case, however, of the exits of Christ, God, angels, *etc.* from the upper stage to the lower, or vice versa, the descending and ascending seems to have been accomplished by means of a windlass. Sharp prints accounts for windlasses, windlass ropes, a locker for the windlass, and for men to keep the windlasses; and he remarks that this was a "customary and necessary appendage to the Pageant vehicles, and that it was placed in the lower room or floor".[21] It was by this method no doubt that Christ in the York tailors' pageant of the *Ascension* was swept up to heaven when he prayed:—

> Send doune a clowde, fadir! for-thy
> I come to þe, my fadir deere.[22]

Feigned Sleep. What seems to have been a definite attempt, however, on the part of the Corpus Christi dramatists to avoid the necessity of exits on the one hand and, on the other, to supply the need of curtains of which they were as yet ignorant, was the use of the device of putting an actor to sleep when he must necessarily drop out of the action. That is, while one scene in a play was being enacted, it was often customary for the actors in the preceding one, instead of leaving the stage, to pretend to be asleep. An example is to be had in the York bowers and fletchers' play of *Peter's*

[21] *Loc. cit.*, p. 72. Compare also pp. 47 and 68.
[22] Smith, *York Plays*, p. 461, ll. 175-6.

Denial of Jesus. The play opens with a dialogue between Annas and Caiaphas, who are awaiting the arrival of the soldiers that have been sent to arrest Christ. Night comes, however, before they arrive; Annas apparently returns to his own *sedes;* and Caiaphas goes to sleep, leaving two of his soldiers on guard. At this point the scene shifts to the other end of the stage, where Peter denies his Lord to two women and where Christ enters between two soldiers a moment later to remind the guilty disciple of his broken vow. The soldiers carry Jesus to Caiaphas's house, but have to wait outside for him to be wakened before the trial can begin. When he is finally aroused, however, he calls Annas over, they take their seats in court, the guardsmen announce to the captors of Christ that they may enter, and the trial begins. It is evident, however, that the whole matter of Caiaphas's feigned sleep has been only a slender device for shifting the scene from his *sedes* to that where Peter denies Christ.

Visions. Another device very similar to that of feigning sleep for the sake of shifting the scenes is that of pretending sleep for the sake of some vision necessary to the plot of the play. In compliance with this custom it is amusing to watch the crude excuses devised by the players, usually the principal actors, for lying down to rest or to sleep in order that an angel or a vision may appear. Joseph becomes so worried over his trouble about Mary that he must of necessity lie down to sleep

in the wilderness, where an angel tells him the child is of the Holy Ghost; the three kings on their way to Jerusalem become strangely sleepy all at once and lie down upon a ready prepared litter by the roadside, where an angel from heaven tells them not to return to Herod; and Thomas rests himself on a bank in the Vale of Jehoshaphat, where he sees the Virgin in a vision and hears her angels singing before her. Such were the commonly accepted methods, crude though they be, of representing visions,—by having one actor feign sleep and another in the garb of an angel come to him and deliver some message from God.

The Crucifixion. Perhaps other devices which ought to be mentioned before closing this chapter are those used in the famous crucifixion scenes. Something of an idea of the jugglery made use of in the would-be realistic representation of the wound in Christ's side may be had from Christ's words in the Chester *Doomsday* pageant. The scene is doomsday and Christ is talking. He has died for the world and has shed his blood for mankind, but he will go further and shed still more.—

> Nowe that you shall appeartlye see,
> Freshe blood blede for thee,
> Good to joye and full greate lee,
> Evill to damnacion,
> Behoulde nowe all men on me
> And se my blood freshe out flye,

That I blede on roode tree
For your salvacion.
Then let him spout blood from his side.[23]

In the crucifixion scenes as well the blood was made to flow from the Savior's side, a piece of jugglery which was accomplished probably by pricking some kind of small leather bag concealed on the person of the player. We have no references to this precise scene for the use of this device, but from two other certain instances of the same usage we are able to learn the method with a fair degree of certainty. For instance, in Preston's *Cambises* (licensed 1569), when Cruelty and Murder catch Lord Smirdis and "Strike him in divers places", the stage-direction is added: *A little bladder of vineger prickt.* Then Cruelty says: "Beholde, now his blood springs out on the ground!" Likewise, in the Canterbury *Marching Watch* (July 11), the townsmen used to enact the murder of St. Thomas à Becket, the patron saint of the city; and the semblance of blood on the martyr's body was made there by means of real blood carried in little leather bags, as may be seen from the following entries in the town documents:

[1504.] It. paied for ij baggs of leder to Gylliam xviijd
[1507.] Pro le gettyng sanguynem . . . . . iiijd
[1512.] For a payer of new gloues for Seynt Thomas jd
[1529.] For a new leder bag for the blode[24] . . vjd

[23] Wright, *Chester Plays*, ii. 191.
[24] Sheppard in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xii. 36-7.

From these entries and from the fact that a semblance of blood was necessitated in the crucifixion scenes one may readily conceive of the device that was employed. The actual crucifixion, the suspension on the cross, must of course have been represented by tying Christ to the cross, as we are frankly told in the stage-directions was the method in the Chester play of that name. Judas probably was hanged as in some of the melodramatic theatrical performances of to-day, by running straps under his shoulders and fastening the gallows rope to these. Sharp prints the following entries with reference to the execution of these two characters:

[1573.]—pd. to Fawston for hangyng Judas . . iiijd
pd. to Fawston for Coc croyng . . . iiijd
1576.—ffor the gybbyt of Jezie . . . . . .xviijd
1577.—ffor a lase [beam(?)] for Judas & a corde . . . . . iijd
1578.—pd for a trwse for Judas . . . . ijs viijd
pd for a newe hoke to hange Judas[25] . . vjd

These two characters, Christ and Judas, were important ones in the early religious drama and their execution marked perhaps the climax of each cycle. The strain on them nervously and physically must have been terrific, so terrific that sometimes they were completely overcome. We hear from an old French writer, for instance, of actors

[25] *Coventry Mysteries*, pp. 36-7.

in the *Passion* at Veximiel, France, almost dying under the exertion. "In the year 1437, on the 3rd of July", the chronicler relates, "was represented the game or play, *de la Passion, N. S.* in the plain of Veximiel, when the park was arranged in a very noble manner, for there were nine ranges of seats in height rising by degrees; all around and behind were great and long seats for the lords and ladies. To represent God was the Lord Nicolle, Lord of Neufchatel, in Lorraine, who was curate of St. Victor of Metz; he was nigh dead upon the cross if he had not been assisted, and it was determined that another priest should be placed on the cross to counterfeit the personage of the crucifixion for that day; but on the following day the said curate St. Victor counterfeited the resurrection, and performed his part very highly during the play. Another priest, who was called Messire Jean de Nicey, and was chaplain of Metrange, played Judas, and was nearly dead while hanging, for his heart failed him, wherefore he was very quickly unhung and carried off: and there the *Mouth of Hell* was very well done; for it opened and shut when the devils required to enter and come out, and had two large eyes of steel." [26]

Conclusion. In conclusion, it may be said of the dramatic conventions of the Corpus Christi stage that they were symbolical in many respects, but crude and incongruous on the whole. In the

[26] Hone, *Ancient Mysteries*, pp. 172-3.

same way that the *sedes* were symbolical representations of houses, temples, and towns, so the *plateae* were decorated to represent country scenes and were at the same time symbolical of greater or less distances. Nor did the symbolism cease here. One or two people were often used to represent hundreds and thousands, and a few moments of time symbolized days and years. Similarly the customs and conventions governing the actors on the stage were crude, stiff, and incongruous. The audience was often addressed and preached to by an actor; prayers were used as crude devices for introducing and explaining scenes; characters were put to sleep in all sorts of impossible places and under most unfavorable circumstances for the sake of advancing the plots; the actors sat on the stage during action or left it if not needed, exiting by means of ladders; ascensions and descents between earth and heaven were accomplished by means of windlasses; and other crude customs and devices were prevalent in the plays of all the cycles. The large number of incongruous conventions so apparent to a man of to-day, however, did not dampen the enthusiasm of the audiences of that day, and the plays continued in popularity until their death from other causes.

VII

THE ACTORS AND THEIR COSTUMES

Introductory. In spite of the extraordinarily great number of incongruities evident to the twentieth-century student of the Corpus Christi stage, it is very probable that the actors and the audiences of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries were not aware of the presence of any such inconsistencies at all. Had they been aware of the crudities in, for instance, their crucifixion scenes, they could not have sat entranced and in tears at the representation of Christ's passion and his death on the cross; and, moreover, they would have removed any such evident incongruous elements; for we know from their town- and guild-accounts that they took great pride in a proper representation of their plays.

In the preceding chapters we have seen something of the care taken in the mechanical features of the pageants, in the symbolic scenery, and the general principles of staging. And we have observed how incongruous and inconsistent, in spite of the care taken in preparation, were many of the

conventions connected with the production of the cycles. We have not so far, however, considered in detail the actors in these plays, their costumes, and the general conventions governing them. It will be the purpose of this chapter, then, to study more fully the actors themselves, their methods of costuming, and their preparations for the pageants.

Requirements of the Players. As has been said already, great care was taken by both the townspeople and the players in making preparations for the pageants. "Good speech, fyne players with Apparill comelye", the Chester banes advertised of their actors; and that this was generally so may be seen from the care taken by the towns in selecting these players, together with the frequent fines for poor playing and costuming. For instance, it was required by law at York, "Þat yerely in Þe tyme of lentyn there shall be called afore the maire for Þe tyme beyng iiij of Þe moste connyng discrete and able players within this Citie, to serche, here, and examen all Þe plaiers and plaies and pagentes thrughoute all Þe artificers belonging to Corpus Xti Plaie. And all suche as Þay shall fynde sufficiant in personne and connyng, to Þe honour of Þe Citie and worship of Þe saide Craftes, for to admitte and able; and all oÞer insufficiant personnes, either in connyng, voice, or personne to discharge, ammove, and avoide. ¶ And Þat no plaier Þat shall plaie in Þe saide Corpus Xti plaie be conducte and

reteyned to plaie but twise on þe day of þe saide playe; and þat he or thay so plaing plaie not ouere twise þe saide day, vpon payne of xl*s.* to forfet vnto þe chaumbre as often tymes as he or þay shall be founden defautie in þe same".[1]

Miss Smith thought the meaning of this last order not clear and suggested that it might refer to a player undertaking more than one part in the same scene; but Mr. Joseph Hall[2] has suggested with greater probability that the prohibition was against actors playing in more than two pageants. For when this ruling was made at York in 1418, there were no less than forty-eight plays and twelve stations at which pageants were accustomed to be represented; and since a popular actor, for instance one in the first pageant, might be especially desired for another character in the thirteenth scene, considerable delay might necessarily be occasioned the thirteenth pageant before this popular actor could get back to the first station, change his costume, and get ready for his part. Mr. Hall thinks it was for this reason, "to prevent possible delay", that the enactment was made, and not to forbid one actor playing double parts in the same scene. And no doubt he is right: the law forbade any player from performing more than twenty-four times in one day; not an unfair leet by any means.

Double Parts. Miss Smith was right, how-

[1] Quoted in Smith, *York Mystery Plays,* Introd., p. xxxvii.

[2] *Englische Studien,* ix. 448-9.

ever, in her suggestion that actors probably undertook more than one part in the same play. She has called attention to the contemporary *Play of the Sacrament,* for which twelve characters were required, and to the note at the end that "IX may play yt at ease", and also to Bale's *Kynge Johan* and Preston's *Cambises,* in both of which several parts might be performed by one actor. But fortunately there is other and more direct evidence in the plays themselves, a part of which Miss Smith herself called attention to elsewhere, though she failed to mention it in connection with the above suggestion. This evidence occurs in the York Tilemakers' *Second Trial before Pilate.* In the beginning of the play Christ is brought for the second time before Pilate by two soldiers, who apparently retire after turning their captive over to their chief. After Christ has been brought into the hall, however, it is remarked "þat þer [the standard-bearers'] schaftes schuke, And þeȝ baneres to this brothell þai bowde all on brede". Pilate becomes angry with the standard-bearers, but they declare that they could not help their banners bowing; so Pilate bids his beadle bring the strongest men in the country to hold the lances.—

> þou bedell, þis bodworde þou bere
> Thurgh þis towne;—
> þe wyghtest men vn-to were,
> And þe strangest þer standerdis to stere,

Hider blithely bid þam be bowne.—ll. 212-16.

Then the beadle says:

A company of keuellis in this contre I knawe
That grete ere and grill, to þe gomes will I gange.—ll. 219-20.

According to the rubric he now goes to the first and second soldiers and says:

Say, ye ledis botht lusty and lange,
ȝe most passe to sir Pilate a pace.
i Mil. If we wirke not his wille it wer wrang,
We are redy to renne on a race,
And rayke.—ll. 221-5.

As Miss Smith says: "If we take this rubric as correct, the beadle goes out and fetches in the same soldiers (1st and 2nd) who had brought Jesus back from Herod to Pilate, and we may suppose had then retired. . . . They as well as Pilate are, however, quite unconscious of the identity, . . . and we should probably name them seventh and eighth soldiers".[4] In other words, we have two actors playing double parts in this scene.

Again: Sharp makes the statement that in 1540 "the matter of þe castell of emaus" was added to

[4] *York Plays*, p. 327 *n.*

the Coventry cappers' pageant. "But", he says, "no further particulars are discoverable in the Accounts of the Company, and as Cleophas and Luke are the only characters introduced, besides that of our Saviour; it seems reasonable to conclude that they were represented by performers who had personated other characters in the former part of the Pageant".[4] Likewise, in the Coventry smiths' accounts for 1490, among other payments to God, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, Annas, and others—each singly,—we find 18*d*. paid "to the devyll & to Judas" and 16*d*. "to Petur & malkus",[5] showing that these four parts must have been represented by only two men. This economical method of employing one actor for several parts was also certainly used in the smiths' later *Destruction of Jerusalem*. And since it became very popular, as we know, in the Elizabethan period, we may not doubt that at this time too, when the plays were given over to the pageant-masters who agreed to bring them forth for certain fixed sums, these men were quick and willing to economize in every way possible.

Entertainment of the Players. These players, as said before, were selected with the greatest of care and were most hospitably entertained at the expense of the companies. In fact, the actors seem to have been employed with the understanding that meals and drink were to be supplied them. At any

[4] *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 46.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

rate, the guild-accounts are full of memoranda for "drinke to the plaiers", "dennares", "stoopes for dreanke", "mete and drenk", "wyne", "drencke to them that plaied", "expenc on þe pleares for makyng them to drynke & hete at ev'y reste", "drynking for the playars betwen the play tymes", and for numerous other convivial expenses.

Requirements of the Players. In return for such large hospitality, however, the actors were expected to render their parts in the pageants carefully and well. In all cases apparently they were required to commit their parts to memory, and a special prompter was paid "for beryng of þe Orygynall" and correcting them in case they forgot their speeches. But if they forgot too often or acted too poorly, both they and their companies were promptly fined for the dishonor which they had brought on the town,—they by their pageant-masters, and their companies by the town council. Accounts are extant showing that companies at Beverley and Coventry were fined because their players did not know their parts; and in the Coventry weavers' accounts for 1450 and 1523 we learn that fines varying from 6*d.* to 10*d.* were collected from the players.[6]

Women's Parts. These actors, it is to be remarked, seem to have been men only, as on the Elizabethan stage. Here again our records are unfortunately defective, and we are able to speak posi-

[6] Sharp, *Weavers' Pageant*, p. 22.

tively of the custom at Coventry only. But there certainly the players seem to have been men only. For instance, in the case of the Coventry weavers in 1450 we find three of their players deficient in their parts in some way and being fined accordingly. Among these fines we notice sixpence "Received of Hew Heyns, pleynge Anne, for hys fyne".[7] Likewise, Dame Procula, Pilate's wife in the Coventry smiths' play, was a man; for in 1495 we hear of money being paid to "Ryngolds man Thomas þt playtt pylatts wyff". In 1498, too, we find *2d.* "paid to pylatts wyffe for his wag's", and in 1490 *2½d.* "for a quarte of wyne for heyrynge of procula is gowne".[8] Perhaps it would not be wholly safe to generalize too broadly from so few records as we have; but since women's parts were customarily taken by men and boys on the later Elizabethan stage, and since we have indisputable proof of the same custom in the above records of the Coventry plays, it seems fair to conclude that the female parts on the Corpus Christi stage were probably always taken by men.

Costumes. Costumes for the players were procured from all sorts of sources. Sometimes they were bought; at other times they were rented; but most frequently they were merely borrowed from the clergy and the neighboring gentry. At Lincoln the Guild of St. Anne was accustomed to

[7] Sharp, *Coventry Weavers' Pageant*, p. 22.
[8] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 30 and *n.*

procure costumes for the players and regularly appointed one of their number as "graceman", the officer who was responsible for getting the garments together. To this guild "every man and woman in the city, being able", was required to belong at an expense of "yearly 4*d.*, man and wife, at the least".[9] The whole story of the Lincoln custom of borrowing costumes is told in a note for the year 1515, when it was "agreed that whereas divers garments and other 'heriorments' are yearly borrowed in the country for the arraying of the pageants of St. Anne's guild, but now the knights and gentlemen are afraid with the plague so that the 'graceman' cannot borrow such garments, every alderman shall prepare and set forth in the said array two good gowns, and every sheriff and every chamberlain a gown, and the persons with them shall wear the same. And the constables are ordered to wait upon the array in the procession, both to keep the people from the array, and also to take heed of such as wear garments in the same".[10] And six years later we find the players borrowing a "gown of my lady 'Powes' for one of the Maries, and the other Mary [was] to be arrayed in the crimson gown of velvet that belongeth to the gild; and the prior of St. Katherine's to be spoken with to have such 'honourments' as we have had aforetime".[11]

[9] *Hist. MSS Comm., Lincoln MSS.* p. 27.
[10] *Hist. MSS Comm.*, xiv, App. 8, p. 25.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Church Vestments. The note of assurance in the borrowing of "honourments" from the prior of St. Katherine's should not be missed, however; for it was from the parish churches that the choicest gold embroidered vestments often came. And in some places, where the churches were fortunate enough to possess a stock of "game gear", the thrifty clergy were accustomed to let the regular players' costumes at a good profit. An instance of this rental of church vestments is to be found among the smiths' accounts at Chester:—

1569. To the Clarke for the lone of a Cope, an Altar Cloth and Tunicle . . . . . xd.
1575. For Copes and Clothe . . . . . xiid.
To John Shawe for lone of a Doctor's gowne and a hode for our eldest Doctor xiid.
1566. Gloves for the Doctors and little God on Midsomer eve . . . . . vid.[12]

Purchase of Costumes. But in many places, where perhaps the parish churches could not furnish all the vestments needed, or where possibly the clergy, like the Rogers at Chester, were more opposed to the "abomination of desolation [defiling] with so highe a hand ye sacred scriptures of God", the costumes had to be furnished by the guilds themselves and preserved from year to year, with possible supplements from outside sources. In such cases the playing gear seems to have been turned over to the pageant-master for safe keeping

[12] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 311 *n.*

and to have been preserved by him in the guild-room of the company. The fullest records of these "plaing garmands" come from Coventry, and it is interesting in the extreme to note the varied purchases and the great care and money expended for blue silks and velvet stockings, for darning Christ's hose, for scouring Mary's crown, mending the devil's head, gilding Judas's beard, and for purchases of white leather for God's coat.

Character of the Costumes. On the whole the costumes were rich, gaudy, splendid, and anachronistic. Medieval Englishmen cared or knew nothing about historical setting and costuming, and what was good enough for an English nobleman or canon was considered entirely sufficient for Abraham, Annas and Caiaphas, or Herod. Besides, the audiences were interested in the splendor of the spectacles, not in the historical accuracy. For this reason the pageant-masters could require their players always to wear gloves, no matter whether the occasion was a ceremonial one or the play of the rustic shepherds in the fields around Bethlehem, or whether it was Pilate on his throne in Jerusalem or Cain plowing in the field with his oxen. For this reason, too, the Coventry smiths could borrow Lady Powes's red velvet gown for Mary Magdalene. The richer the gown, the more splendid the show, no matter whether the costume was fitting to the particular rank of the personage represented or not.

Adam and Eve. Perhaps of all the costumes used in the Corpus Christi plays those of Adam and of Eve have been most discussed. Warton thought these characters were represented on the stage in absolute nudity. "In these Mysteries", he says, "I have sometimes seen gross and open obscenities. In a play of *the Old and New Testament*, Adam and Eve are both exhibited on the stage naked, and conversing about their nakedness; this very pertinently introduces the next scene, in which they have coverings of fig-leaves. This extraordinary spectacle was beheld by a numerous assembly of both sexes with great composure: they had the authority of scripture for such a representation, and they gave matters just as they found them in the third chapter of Genesis. It would have been absolute heresy to have departed from the sacred text in personating the primitive appearance of our first parents, whom the spectators so nearly resembled in simplicity." [13]

Warton evidently thought the character of Eve impersonated by a woman. It was not, however; and in addition to, what Chambers calls "a fine *a priori* improbability" against her nakedness, Mr. R. B. McKerrow has shown with almost certainty that the players must have used "breeks" in order to (if we may so term it) "symbolize" their nudity. Mr. McKerrow cites first a passage of two lines from the well-known moral treatise of Dominicus

[13] *History of English Poetry*, i. 243-4.

Mancinus, *De Quatuor Virtutibus,* first printed in 1484.—

> 'Histrio, qui in scaenam vadit, sibi subligar aptat
> Ne prodat quidquid lex verecunda tegit.'

Mancinus' book was translated three times into English in the course of the sixteenth century—once into prose by an unknown translator [*The englysshe of Mancyne apon the foure cardynale vertues,* c. 1520], and twice into verse by Alexander Barclay [*Myrrour of good maners,* c. 1523] and George Turberville [*A plaine Path to perfect Vertue,* 1568] respectively. Two of these translations are not without interest. The first renders the two lines in question as follows:

'A disgyser yt goeth into a secret corner callyd a sene of the pleyinge place to chaunge his rayment: ordenyth hymselfe a breche: the whiche at ye lest wyse he kepith styll apon hym: whatsomeuer pagent he pleyith.'

This translation is interesting for the use of the word 'scene' apparently in the sense of tiring-room, but Barclay's is perhaps rather more to the point.

Expanding his original somewhat and saying that even 'a dysgysed Iougler or vyle iester vnpure' observes a certain amount of decency, he continues:

> 'And therfore apperyng all naked in a play
> If his parte so requyre presented for to be
> He kepeth his foule partes hyd in a brake alway
> Nat shewyng what nature hath set in pryuete.'

I presume that by 'brake' he means 'breeks': in the reprint of the *Myrrour,* which was appended to the edition of Barclay's translation of *Stultifera Navis* in 1570,

the word appears as 'breech'. It seems clear that the translator must have been thinking of the Adam and Eve plays, for few, if any, of the other characters would require to be represented as naked.

Turberville's version is only of interest in that he seems to have missed the point of the original, suggesting at least that he had never seen a play of this sort at all. He has:

> 'When so a Player comes on stage
> he ties his trinkets harde,
> For feare if ought should fal, the plays
> *Decorum* should be marde.'[14]

It may be added that the "2 cotes & a payre hosen for Eve, stayned" and "A cote & hosen for Adam, Steyned" at Norwich were probably for their costumes after being clothed by God and driven out of Eden. The "2 hearys for Adam & Eve", however, would seem to indicate that they had worn wigs throughout the play.

God. Another character closely associated with those of Adam and of Eve was God, although comparatively little is known of the actual costuming of this personage. At Norwich in the grocers' *Fall of Man* God wore a mask and artificial hair, and at Newcastle in the slaters' *Abraham and Isaac* he and his angel both wore crowns. And from the Rogers *Breauarye* it would seem that at Chester he probably had his face gilded. The Rogers quotation from the banes of the plays is as follows:

[14] *Modern Language Quarterly*, vi. 145-6.

For no man can proportion that Godhead, I saye,
To the shape of man face, nose, and eyne;
But sethence ye face gilte doth disfigure ye man that deme
A Clowdy Coueringe of ye man a voyce only to heare,
And not God in shape or person to appeare.[15]

As we shall see later, Christ, who was also called God, had his costume of white leather, and it may be possible that God was also apparelled in this way.

Noah. Noah and his wife were two other important personages in the Old Testament scenes, but practically no information as to their costumes has survived. In the Wakefield play we are told that Noah wore some sort of coat which he cast off before beginning work on the ark. And in the Hull mariners' scene, which, however, seems not to have been of the regular Corpus Christi type of play, he was furnished with "a payr of new mytens" and a coat made of three skins. How Noah's wife, "Uxor Noe", was arrayed we do not know; but that she must have been a popular character may be judged from the speeches given her in the plays. Indeed, in several of the plays she seems to have been little more than a clown, and, being a man as she was, boxing her husband's ears, refus-

[15] Furnivall, *Digby Mysteries*, p. xx.

ing to enter the ark of her own accord, and requiring her husband and sons to force her in—all this before a crowd of gaping, ale-drinking, and apple-eating commons,—she must have created an immense amount of fun. That she was thus looked upon as a clown is very forcibly emphasized in the York play when she inquires of her husband:

> But Noye, where are nowe all oure kynne,
> And companye we knewe be-fore?
> *Noe.* Dame, all ar drowned, late be thy dyne.
> —ll. 269-71.

In other words, shut your mouth!

The Devil. Possibly the most popular character on the Corpus Christi stage, however, was the Devil; certainly he was so if we except Christ. In fact, the Devil and his lively troop of under-demons seem to have furnished most of the comedy in many of the plays. And no doubt their various noises, strange gestures, unnatural contortions, and queer costumes must have been the cause of much excited laughter among the vulgar spectators. A good example of this comical side of the Devil's character in the Corpus Christi plays is to be seen at the beginning of the York smiths' *Temptation of Jesus,* where *Diabolus* in the midst of the throng about the pageant-wagon suddenly gains the attention of the audience by exclaiming:

> *Diab.* Make rome be-lyve, and late me gang,
> Who makis here all þis þrang?

High you hense! high myght ȝou hang
right with a roppe.
I drede me þat I dwelle to lang
to do a jape.—ll. 1-6.

In other words, we may imagine that the pageant-wagon has just moved into its place at the station and that the Devil, as a clever device for gaining the attention of the audience, has purposely dropped off the wagon among the crowd, where he has been chasing timid small boys and pretending to catch them and take them off to hell. Then when all is ready on the wagon and Christ is in his place on the mountain, *Diabolus* suddenly rushes toward the wagon, climbs in, and takes his place beside Christ.

The "Adam" Play. Such a custom of making excursions through the audience would be strictly in accordance with the traditional stage habits of the Devil, an example of which is to be seen in the Anglo-Norman *Adam,* where the devils carry Adam and Eve to hell. The stage-direction there reads: "Then shall come the devil and three or four devils with him, carrying in their hands chains and iron fetters, which they shall put on the necks of Adam and Eve. And some shall push and others pull them to hell; and hard by hell shall be other devils ready to meet them, who shall hold high revel at their fall. And certain other devils shall point them out as they come, and shall snatch them up and carry them into hell; and there shall they make

a great smoke arise, and call aloud to each other with glee in their hell, and clash their pots and kettles, that they may be heard without. And after a little delay the devils shall come out and run about the stage; but some shall remain in hell".[16]

Costumes of the Devil. Numerous pictures of the Devil have come down to us from medieval times, generally picturing him with horns on his head, a long crooked snout, and a tail. He is usually clad in black and carries a horn, a great club, or some kind of staff with curved hooks on the end. In the Newcastle shipwrights' *Noah's Ark* the Devil swears by his crooked snout,[17] which indicates that some kind of mask must have been worn; and in *Gammer Gurton's Needle* Hodge gives an excellent description of what one may suppose to have been the old Corpus Christi devil:—

> [Hodge] By the masse, ich saw him of late cal vp a great blacke deuill!
> O, the knaue cryed "ho! ho!" He roared, and he thundred.
> And yead bene here, cham sure yould murrenly ha wondred! . . .
> *Gammer.* But, Hodge, had he no hornes, to pushe?

[16] Chambers's translation from the Latin stage-directions after l. 590. Compare Grass, *Das Adamsspiel,* pp. 31-2.

[17] Compare Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays,* p. 23, l. 127.

Hodge. As long as your two armes! Saw ye neuer Fryer Rushe
Painted on a cloth, with a side long cowes tayle,
And crooked clouen feete, and many a hoked nayle?
For al the world, if I shuld iudg, chould recken him his brother.
Loke, euen what face Frier Rush had, the deuil had such another! [18]

All this evidence is corroborated by entries in the Coventry accounts as given by Sharp. Some of the items to be noted are as follows: "1451.—Itm payd for þe demons garment makyng & þ[e] stof . . . v*s.* iij*d.* ob.; Itm payd for collyryng of þe same garment . . . viij*d.*; 1494.—Itm paid to Wattis for dressyng of the devells hede . . . viij*d.*; 1498.—It' paid for peynttyng of the demones hede; 1567.—Itm payd for a stafe for the demon . . . iiij*d.*;[19] Itm payde for mendynge þe devells cote and makyng the devells heade . . . iiij*s.* v*jd.*; Itm payd for a yard of canvas for þe devells malle & for makyng . . . viij*d.*; Itm payd for payntyng þe devells clubbe;[20] 1540.—It' for peyntyng & makyng new ij damons heds; 1556.—payd for a demons face . . . ij*s.*; 1560.—payd to Cro for mendyng the devells cottes . . . xx*d.*; 1568.—payd for mak-

[18] III. 2: 12-22.
[19] *Coventry Mysteries,* p. 31.
[20] *Ibid.,* p. 56.

yng the devells hose . . . viij*d.*; payd for canvas for one of the devells hose . . . xj*d.*; payd for makyng the ij devells facys . . . x*s.*; payd for makyng a payre of hose wt. heare . . . xxij*d.*; payd for iij*li.* of heare . . . ij*s.* vj*d.*; 1572.—It' pd for ij pound of heare for the demons cotts & hose and mending".[21]

From these entries we see that the Devil in one instance had a club made of canvas, painted and possibly stuffed with wool, as was Pilate's (which we shall notice later); and Sharp remarks that from the many entries made for painting and repairing the Devil's mall, "we may presume that by way of exciting merriment, he laid about him during the time of performance on such persons as were within his reach, as well as in those instances where it was required in the play". In the other instance we notice that the Devil had a "stafe", which probably was the hooked staff referred to above. From these citations it is also certain that the Devil in some cases wore a false face; in others, an entire false head. This was of course the easiest method of presenting the crooked snout and the well-known horns. Likewise, several pounds of hair were bought for his coat and hose, with the intent probably of representing him as fearfully as possible. At Norwich, too, where "a cote wt hosen & tayle for ye serpente, steyned, wt a wt heare", was found among the properties of the grocers' company in

[21] *Loc. cit.*, p. 69.

1565, he seems to have been adorned with hair; but in this case he seems to have been habited, not in his usual costume, but in one especially made to represent the snake in the garden of Eden. Sharp, however, prints a cut picturing a hairy horned devil and two feathered fellows in one of his various hell-pictures, but the present writer has not met with any other references which indicate that the Devil was hairy. The reference in the banes to the Chester plays of "the devill in his fethers, all ragger and rente" is too well known to need comment.

Souls. Other characters often closely associated with the devils were the souls of those supposed to be dead, of whom there were usually six, three "savyd" and three "dampnyd". From various references here and there in the plays, as well as from the Coventry account-books, it seems that the damned souls were dressed in black and the saved ones in white. Lucifer's expression noted above, "Now I am a devyl ful derke, that was an aungelle bryht", would indicate this difference, as would the cry of the fallen angels in the Wakefield *Creation*:—

> Now ar we waxen blak as any coyll,
> and vgly, tatyrd as a foyll.—ll. 136-7.

In *Henry V* (II. 3: 42-4), too, the Boy seems to refer to the same custom of the damned souls being clothed in black when he says: "Do you not re-

member, a' saw a flea stick upon Bardolph's nose, and a' said it was a black soul burning in hell-fire"? And the evidence from the drapers' accounts at Coventry leaves no doubt that this was the custom in that city. Sharp prints the following from their accounts: "1536.—Itm for mendyng the white & the blake soules cotes . . . viij*d;* 1537.—Itm for v elnes of Canvas for shyrts & hose for the blakke soules, at v*d.* the elne . . . ij*s.* j*d;* Itm for coloryng and makyng the same cots . . . ix*d;* Itm for makyng & mendynge of the blakke soules hose . . . vj*d;* Itm for a payre of newe hose & mendyng of olde for the whyte soules . . . xviij*d;* 1543.—It' p'd ffor the mendyng of the whytt solls kotts wt the ij skyns þt. went to them . . . xvj*d;* 1556.—p'd for canvas for the sollys cottys xix ellys . . . xiiij*s* iij*d;* p'd for ix elys of canvas made yellow . . . xij*d;* p'd for x elys of canvas made blacke . . . x*d;* payd for ij pessys of yallow bokeram . . . vij*s* vj*d;* payd for iiij yards of Rede bokaram . . . ij*s* viij*d;* payd for makyng the sollys cotts . . . vj*s* viij*d;* p'd for blakyng the sollys fassys; 1565.—p'd for ix yards & a halfe of bukram for the Sowles coates . . . vij*s;* 1567.—p'd for iij elnes of yelloo Canvas . . . ij*s* x*d;* It' for collering the solles cotts yelloo . . . xvj*d*".[22] From which it appears that the white or saved souls were habited in white coats and hose and that these coats were made of skins. In the case of the black or damned souls, they were

[22] *Loc. cit.*, p. 70.

dressed in coats and hose of black buckram or canvas and had their faces blackened. In later years, however, their costumes came to be black, yellow, and red parti-colored, a device used possibly to impress the spectators all the more forcibly with the horror of their abode. The saved and lost souls were probably never more than minor characters in any of the plays. Certainly this was true in the Coventry drapers' play, if we may judge from the amounts paid them, their fees usually being about half those of the principal characters.

Angels. The costumes for angels seem to have been as various as were the personages who represented these characters. One purpose, however, may be said to have governed the designing of their apparel: to make it emblematical of the heavenly kingdom, to have it represent purity and meekness. This was Mary's statement, rather crudely expressed, to the angel in the Digby *Mary Magdalene:*—

[*ijus angelus.*]

In a mentyll of whyte xall be ower araye;
The dores xall opyn a-ȝens vs be ryth.

Mary.

O, gracyus god, now I vndyrstond!
thys clothyng of whyte is tokenyng of mekeness.[23]

[23] Furnivall, *Digby Mysteries,* p. 115.

In the cappers' play at Coventry the angels' costumes seem to have come from one of the churches; for we find entries " for waschyng þe angells albs " and " for mendynge þe angells surplisses & wasshyng ".[24] In the Beverley *Fall of Man* the angel wore wings; in the Norwich grocers' pageant he wore a " Cote & over hoses of Apis Skynns "; and in the weavers' play at Coventry and in the *Abraham and Isaac* at Newcastle the angels, like God, wore crowns. Sharp's records of the angels' costumes in the Coventry drapers' play, where there were four angels, is as follows: " 1538.—Itm for makyng an angells, scytte [suit?] . . . xij*d.*; 1540.—Itm for peyntyng & makyng new iiij peire of angells wyngs; 1556.—payd for iiij pere of angyllys wyngys . . . ij*s.* viij*d.*; payd for iiij dyadymes . . . ij*s.* vij*d.*; payd for vj goldyn skynnes . . . v*s.*[25] Here again it is noticeable that the angels wore wings and diadems, and Sharp thinks that the golden skins were for the coats. " No other personages ", he says, " seem to have so strong a claim to the six Golden skins: they were certainly not used for any part of God's dress; and in the original entry this item immediately follows that of the four Diadems."

Christ. The most important personage in the Corpus Christi plays as a whole undoubtedly was Christ, called also God. The importance of this character is shown by the amounts paid the actors

[24] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, pp. 55-6.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

who impersonated him, by the stories that have come down to us about the scenes in which he took part, and by a study of the plays themselves. In the Chester blacksmiths' *Purification of Mary,* where Christ is only a child, we find sixteen pence paid "the lytell God" in 1551, twelve pence in 1554, and sixteen pence again in 1567. By the Coventry weavers, where he is also a child, we find four pence paid in 1551 "to the woman for her chyld", and in 1553 the same amount again "to the letell chylde".[26] But in the Coventry drapers' *Doomsday,* where Christ is a man and is the most important personage in the play, his fee in 1538 was 3*s.* 4*d.* against 1*s.* 6*d.* to the next highest paid actor.

Of the importance and the power of this character on his audiences Sharp relates an interesting story from Disraeli's MS. Life of John Shaw, Vicar of Rotherham, inserted in his *Curiosities of Literature.* Says the Vicar, who was preaching on one occasion at a place called Cartmel in Lancashire: "I found a very large spacious church, scarce any seats in it; a people very ignorant, and yet willing to learn; so I had frequently some thousands of hearers. I catechised in season and out of season. The churches were so thronged at nine in the morning, that I had much ado to get to the pulpit. One day, an old man of sixty, sensible enough in other things, and living in the parish of Cartmel, coming to me on some business, I told him that he belonged to my

[26] Sharp, *Weavers' Pageant,* p. 22.

care and charge, and I desired him to be informed in his knowledge of religion. I asked him how many Gods there were? He said he knew not. I informing him, asked again how he thought to be saved? He answered he could not tell. Yet thought that was a harder question than the other. I told him that the way to salvation was by Jesus Christ; God-man, who, as he was man, shed his blood for us on the cross, &c. Oh Sir, said he, I think I heard of that man you speak of once in a play at Kendall, called Corpus Christ's play, where there was a man on a tree, and blood run down, &c. And afterwards he professed he could not remember that he ever heard of salvation by Jesus, but in that play."

Christ's Costumes. Christ's costume seems to have been more or less uniform. In the York pinners' *Crucifixion* we have a "kirtill", a "coote", and a "mantell" referred to as his apparel, and in the corresponding play at Chester, a coat, a kirtle, and a "paulle". In the Coventry weavers' accounts for 1564 payments were made for "payntyng of Jesus heade", probably gilt, and for darning Christ's hose; and Sharp adds the following items relative to his costume in the Coventry smiths' and cappers' plays: "1451.—It' payed for vj skynnys of whitleder to godds garment . . . xviij*d.*; It' payed for makyng of the same garment . . . x*d.*; 1553.—It' payd for v schepskens for gods coot & for makyng . . . iij*s.*; 1498.—It' payd for mendyng a cheverel

for god and for sowyng of gods kote of leddur and for makyng of the hands to the same kote . . . xij*d.;* 1490.—It' a cheverel gyld for Ihesus; 1565.—pd for payntyng & gyldyng gods cote; pd for a gyrdyll for god . . . iij*d.;* 1501.—It' pd ffor a newe sudere for god . . . vij*d.;*[27] 1556.—payde for vij skynnes for godys cote; 1557.—paid for a peyre of gloves for god . . . ij*d.;* 1562.—payd for a Cote for God and for a payre of gloves . . . iij*s.*; 1565.—p'd for iij yards of Redde Sendall for God . . . xx*d*".[28] The use of the "Redde Sendall" is not clear, but from the other entries it is evident that Christ's hair was gilded and that he wore a coat of sheepskin leather which was sometimes white, sometimes gilded, and to which the hands were attached. The "sudere" was probably the legendary veronica on which his image was painted and may or may not have been carried by him.

"**Anima Christi.**" Another, and yet the same, character comes up for discussion next, the Spirit of Christ, *Anima Christi,* or Spirit of God, about which Sharp was strangely confused in his *Dissertation.* The four items which he prints are as follows: "Itm payd for þe spret of Gods cote . . . ij*s*; Itm payd for þe makyng of þe same cote . . . viij*d*; Itm payd for ij yardes and halfe off bockram to make the spirits cote . . . ij*s* j*d;* Itm payd for makynge the same cote . . . viij*d*".[29]

[27] *Loc. cit.,* p. 26.
[28] *Ibid.,* p. 69.
[29] *Ibid.,* p. 54.

With regard to this character Sharp says: "No article of dress explicitly intended for this character [Christ, or God] appears in the Accounts. There is a charge for painting, inter alia, þ[e] Rattel, þe Spade & ij crossys & hell mowythe" and also an item of expences for boards used about the *Sepulchre* side of the Pageant . . . . I once hesitated in determining whether this character [the Spirit of God] represented God the Father, or was meant for our Saviour after his resurrection; but a very ingenious friend says:—'I suspect the "Spirit of God" to mean the Holy Ghost. This third person in the Trinity was not always represented as a dove, but occasionally as a human figure, as some old prints demonstrate'." Sharp's friend, however, seems to have been more ingenious than reasonable in his suggestion; for a study of the Coventry account-books shows that the scenes represented by the cappers were the descent into hell, the setting of the watch, the resurrection, and the appearance to Mary Magdalene and the travelers, in none of which is any spirit of God the Father needed. On the contrary, the Spirit of Christ, *Anima Christi,* is certainly needed in the harrowing of hell, and would be perfectly appropriate in the others. Moreover, in none of the plays that have come down to us do we have any use of the spirit of God the Father, the Holy Ghost, while in the *Descent into Hell* of the so-called *Ludus Coventriæ* we do have an *Anima Christi.* Hence it seems

reasonable to suppose that the buckram garments referred to above were meant for the Spirit of Christ; and since no other article of dress was purchased for Christ himself, it may not be impossible that the *Anima Christi* appeared instead of the living Christ in all the cappers' scenes.

Herod. The Corpus Christi Herod is known to all of us from Hamlet's description of his ranting manner: "O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod". And that Hamlet's description is not overdrawn let the following from the Chester *Adoration of the Magi* bear witness:—

> For I am king of all mankinde,
> I byd, I beat, I loose, I bynde,
> I maister the Moone; take this in mynde
> that I am most of mighte.
>
> I am the greatest aboue degree,
> that is or was or euer shall be.
> the Sonne it dare not shyne on me
> if I byd hym goe downe.—ll. 169-76.

The importance of Herod's character in the plays is shown by the large amount spent on his costumes and by the sums he received for his work, the performer receiving as much as 3*s*. 8*d*. for his services. Some of the garments bought for him by the Coventry smiths are as follows: " 1477.—It' to a peynter for peyntyng the ffauchon & herods face . . . x*d*; 1490.—A ' fawchon' a ' septur ' and ' a Creste for heroude '; 1501.—Itm ffor vj ȝards satten iij quatrs . . . . xvj*s* x*d*; Itm for v ȝardus off blowe bokeram . . . ij*s* xj*d*; It' pd ffor makyng off herodus gone . . . xv*d*; 1547.—Pd to John Croo for mendyng of herrods hed and a myter and other thyngs . . . ij*s;* 1489.—It' paid ffor a gowen to Arrode . . . . vij*s* iiij*d*; It' paid ffor peyntyng & steynyng ther off . . . vj*s* iiij*d;* It' payd ffor Aroddes garment peynttyng þt he went a prossayon in . . . . xx*d*; 1494.—It' payd for iij platis to Heroddis Crest of Iron . . . vj*d;* It' payd for a paper of Aresdyke [tinsel] . . . xij*d;* It' payd to Hatfeld for dressyng of Herods Creste . . . . xiiij*d*; 1499.—It' payd to John Hatfelde for colours and gold foyle & sylver foyle for þe crest and for þe fawchon ".[30]

Little comment is needed on these entries. Herod in one year, it is evident, wore a satin gown, probably blue, Sharp tells us, for which the sum of nearly a pound was paid; in other years his gown was painted or stained; he also wore a false face

[30] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, pp. 28-9.

and hair and a crest adorned with gold foil; and he carried a falchion which was also gilt. Leach adds that at Beverley Herod always appeared with a black face,[31] but for this assertion the present writer has not been able to find any further justification than that the mercers in that town played "Black Herod".

Pilate. A character of equal or even greater importance than Herod was Pilate, whom Mr. C. M. Gayley has chosen to interpret as something of a clown[32], though there seems to be no justification in the plays for this view. The grounds for Mr. Gayley's suggestion seem to be that Pilate carried a mall, or club, and that some sort of leather balls, the use of which we do not certainly know, were bought for him. Let us observe the entries which refer to Pilate in the Coventry smiths' and cappers' accounts: "1480.— pd for mendyng of pilats hat . . . iiij*d*; 1494.—It' paid for braband to pylatts hate v*d* & for canvas . . . ij*d* ob.; 1490.—It' a Cloke for pilatte [and] Itm a hatt for pilatte repaired;[33] [A green(?) cloak for Pilate and] a skeane of grene silke [to mend it]; Makyng of pylatts malle . . . xxij*d*.; A new malle . . . xx*d*; pd Richard Hall for makyng pylates clubbe . . . xiij*d*; pd ffor ij pounde & halfe off woole ffor the same clubbe . . . x*d*; pd for balles for pylatt . . .

[31] In *Furnivall Miscellany*, pp. 213-14.
[32] *Plays of Our Forefathers*, p. 106.
[33] Sharp, *Loc. cit.*, p. 32.

iij*d;* lether for balles . . . ij*d;* pd for makyng of xvj balls & for ij skyns of lether . . . v*d;* pd for a skyn for balls, for makyng & sowyng . . . v*d*; pd for balls & for mendyng of pylatts cloobe . . . iiij*d;* p'd for a payre of gloves for pylate . . . iiij*d;* p'd for assyden for pilat head . . . ij*d;* p'd for canvas . . . vj*d;* & the makyng of pylats doblet . . . xvj*d*".[34]

From these items we see that Pilate at various times wore a cloak, which was probably green (since green silk thread was bought for mending it), a doublet, gloves, and a gilded wig, and that he carried a mall, the head of which was made of leather stuffed with wool and fixed on a wooden handle. This leather head was seventeen inches long, Sharp tells us, and Mr. Gayley adds of its use: "His [Pilate's] mall . . . served partly for a sign of authority but more for beating his companions and the public. The balls were perhaps the insignia of office; but more likely, since they, too, were of leather, they served for interludes of juggling. The margin of the Chester plays is studded with stage directions such as 'fluryshe', 'cast up', 'sworde', when ranting kings like Balaak and Herod are on the boards. The 'caste-up' is hardly of anything internal: it may be of the staff (sceptre) or of the balls. Such nonsense seemed requisite to offset the intense and unfamiliar strain of gazing upon royalty even though illusionary[35]". This, however, seems

[34] Sharp, *Loc. cit.*, pp. 50-1.
[35] *Loc. cit.*, p. 106.

rather a strained delineation of Pilate's character, especially since none of the plays show Pilate to be of the ranting Herod type. Moreover, a study of the Chester plays, to which Mr. Gayley refers, shows that none of the stage-directions which suggested jugglery to him, refer to Pilate at all; and it might easily be admitted that the club was made of leather and stuffed with wool for the purpose of striking those under Pilate's authority without requiring us to regard him as a clown; for real kings and queens in even later times are known to have shown even more violent manifestations of temper than merely striking their courtiers. The present writer, to be sure, would like to hold this view of Pilate's character, for it adds a new trait to his nature; but the facts seem against it. The Chester stage-directions implying jugglery do not refer to Pilate at all; the mall of itself would not give him the character of a clown, especially since the whole tenor of the play is against this view; and the balls of which so much has been made seem to have been nothing more than the little leather balls sewed on the leather club. In the picture which Sharp has given us of this mall only three of these balls are left; but the club was then in a very dilapidated condition, as a glance at the picture will show, and it may be supposed that the rest of them were lost off in the plays and in the course of the centuries of decay.

Annas and Caiaphas. Annas and Caiaphas in

the Corpus Christi plays seem to have been in importance almost equal to Pilate. At Coventry in 1490 the payment to Pilate was 4*s.*, to Annas 2*s.* 2*d.*, and to Caiaphas 3*s.* 4*d.*, and in other years the relative differences were about the same. Excellent descriptions of the costumes of both these characters have survived, fortunately enough, in the Coventry records. The smiths' accounts are as follows: "1486.—It' for a tabarde & an hoode [the hire of] . . . iiij*d.*; 1487.—It' paid ffor hyryng off a skarlet wood [hood] and a raygete [rochet] ffor on off the bisshopis . . . v*d.*; 1499.—It' payde for colours and gold foyle & sylver foyle for ij myttyrs; 1544.—payd for a bysschops taberd of scarlet that we bowght in the trente church . . . x*s.*;[36] Itm paide for makyng þe ij byschoppes gownse . . . xxj*d*; Itm p'd for furryng þe sayd gownse . . . ij*s* iiij*d*; Itm an ell of bockram for one of the bysshoppes . . . xiij*d*; Itm payd for furrynge of the hoodes . . . viij[*d*]".[37] And in the smiths' *Purification* at Chester the doctors in the temple, though a different set of doctors from those mentioned above, seem to have worn very similar costumes. In 1575, for instance, 12*d.* was paid "To John Shawe for lone of a Doctor's gowne and a hode for our eldest Doctor".[38] And Joseph in both this play and in the corresponding scene at Wake-

[36] Sharp, *Loc. cit.*, pp. 27-8.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[38] Morris, *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns*, p. 311 *n.*

field refers to the doctor as " so gay in furres fyne ". Simeon, likewise, puts on his vestments before Mary and Joseph come with the Christ child. It will thus be seen that no special care seems to have been taken to distinguish the doctors and Annas and Caiaphas. All were richly dressed; but beyond this the esthetic tastes of the players and the people did not extend. Hence the following descriptions of the " honourments " of Annas and Caiaphas in the stage-directions of the so-called *Ludus Coventriæ*, though they do not come under the strict head of Corpus Christi costumes, seem nevertheless good summaries of the usual dresses of these characters. Annas's gown is thus minutely described:—

Here xal Annas shewyn hymself in his stage, be seyn after a busshop of the hoold lawe, in a skarlet gowne, and over that a blew tabbard furryd with whyte, and a mytere on his hed, after the hoold lawe; ij. doctorys stondyng by hym in furryd hodys, and on beforn hem with his staff of astat, and eche of hem on here hedys a furryd cappe, with a gret knop in the crowne, and on stondyng beforn as a Sarazyn, the wiche xal be his masangere.[39]

And Caiaphas's apparel is made to vary only slightly from Annas's:—

Here goth the masangere forth, and in the mene tyme Cayphas shewyth himself in his skafhald arayd lyche to Annas, savyng his tabbard xal be red furryd with white:

[39] Halliwell, *Coventry Mysteries*, pp. 244-5.

ij. doctorys with him arayd with pellys aftyr the old gyse, and furryd cappys on here hedys.[40]

The Three Marys. The three Marys may all be considered together; for, with the exception of the crown always worn by the Virgin, their costumes seem to have been alike. Attention has already been called to the note at Lincoln which mentions "a gown [borrowed] of my lady 'Powes' for one of the Maries, and the other Mary to be arrayed in the crimson gown of velvet that belongeth to the gild". Likewise, from the Coventry smiths' accounts we have the following references to the clothes of Mary Magdalene and the "two side Maries": "Itm p'd for mendynge maudlyns cote . . . iiij*d*; Itm payd for skowryng of maryes crowns . . . j*d*; Itm for payntynge þe maries rolles[41] . . . . iiij*d*; Itm p'd for a yard of bokeram . . . xij*d*; Itm p'd for makynge þe roles . . . .ij*d*; Itm p'd for mendyng þe maries rolles . . . ij*d*; paid for mendyng the maries heare . . . viij*d*".[42]

Tormentors. Before passing to the other minor or less-known characters it may be well to notice the costumes of the tormentors, who, at Coventry at least, seem to have been the most gaily

[40] *Loc. cit.*, p. 246.

[41] The use of these "rolles" is not known. A friend has suggested to the author that they may refer to the rolls of hair,—not buckram over which the hair was rolled, but to the actual rolls of artificial hair as worn by the players, who were men and had to have their headgear rolled and painted in advance.

[42] Sharp, *Loc. cit.*, p. 56.

and gorgeously appareled of the lesser personages. In the Coventry *Crucifixion,* for example, there were "iiij Jakkets of blake bokeram for þe tormentors wt nayles & dysse upon þem", and "other iiij for tormentors of an other suett wythe damaske fflowers", and yet "ij party Jakketts of Rede and blake" and "ij of bokeram wt hamers crowned".[43] Three hammers crowned, it is to be noted, were the arms of the smiths' company; and the fact that the large sum of twenty-four shillings was paid for four gowns and the four hoods that went with them may be accounted for on the ground that these tormentors bore the arms of the company and were in a measure the guild's representatives. "Ye Pendon bearer" at Norwich also wore "a cote of yellow buckram wt ye Grocers' arms"; and one might infer, since the companies were not allowed to show their arms on the pageant-wagon, that they were thus accustomed to display their insignia on one of the minor characters.

Minor Characters. Of the costumes of the other characters in the Corpus Christi plays little is known, and their apparel may be passed over more hastily. St. Thomas of India in the Wakefield play of that name wore a hat, a mantle, a coat, a gay girdle, and carried a silk purse and a staff.[44] Peter in the Coventry smiths' *Crucifixion* wore a "cheverel gyld" and probably an artificial beard and a

[43] Sharp, *Loc. cit.,* p. 16.
[44] *Cf.* ll. 319 ff.

gown of some kind. Judas seems to have had the traditional red beard and hair; and in the Coventry *Crucifixion* an expenditure of two shillings was made "for Canvys for Judas Coote". Joseph, the foster father of Christ, is always referred to as an old man. In the Chester *Nativity* he is mentioned as having a beard "like a buske of breyers, with a pound of heaire about his mouth and more". The Magi in the Chester *Magi's Oblation* are spoken of as "in rich Aray", but nothing further is known of their "arayment". In the Coventry smiths' *Crucifixion,* Pilate's wife, Dame Procula, wore a gown borrowed of one "Maisturres grymesby"; and again in 1490 "a quarte of wyne [was given] for heyrynge of procula is gowne". In 1477 it would seem that she wore a white gown of some kind, since what seems to have been white sleeves[45] were put into one of her garments. Pilate's son in the same play in 1490 wore a hat and a gown of some kind and carried a poll-axe and a sceptre. And, lastly, the knights in the Coventry cappers', and possibly in the smiths', play were arrayed in suits of white armor. A similar dress for the knights is thus described in the stage-directions to the Hegge plays, when Judas comes with his rabble to betray Christ at Olivet: "Here Jhesus with his dyscipulis goth into the place, and ther xal come in a x. personys weyl be-seen in white arneys, and breganderes, and some dysgysed in odyr

[45] Compare Sharp, *Loc. cit.,* p. 30.

garmentes, with swerdys, gleyvys, and other straunge wepons, as cressettys, with feyr and lanternys and torchis lyth ".[46]

Summary. We have thus reviewed what little is known of the actors and their costumes on the Corpus Christi stage. From this little, however, is discernible something of the richness and the splendor with which the players decorated themselves, without care for the appropriateness, historical or otherwise, of the costumes selected. From this, too, we have seen how the appeal of the actors and their apparel was made to the eye and to the emotions rather than to the educated mind, and, hence, how the pageant-masters could be content to dress their players in incongruous, anachronistic costumes. Symbolism of a vague and uncertain kind was used, but the fundamental appeal to the eye and the esthetic tastes of the people was made through the richness and the bright coloring of the costumes.

[46] Compare Halliwell, *Coventry Mysteries,* p. 283.

VIII

THE PASSING OF THE PAGEANTS

Introductory. To one living in the palmy days of the Corpus Christi festival in the last quarter of the fifteenth century it would probably have seemed impossible that the glory of the day could ever pass away; and yet a century later the pageants were a thing of the past. The death of the plays had been slow and perhaps imperceptible, but nevertheless sure. Nor was this death due, as many have thought, either to the expense incident to the production of the plays or to the varying wealth, growth, or decline of the guilds, but rather to an entire change of thought and religious feeling in the English nation. That this is true may be seen from a cursory glance at the plays and their audiences in the earlier and later years of the Corpus Christi festival.

Popularity of the Pageants. In the institution and gradual spread of the Corpus Christi plays in England shortly after 1311 there is no doubt that the serious interest of the people was involved spiritually, or religiously, as well as for the sake of recreation. One cannot understand these plays otherwise; this is the note that stands out from all

the rest in the thousand days of pardon granted by Pope Clement to " euery person that resorted peaceably to see the same playes ", in the wills of dying men leaving money and garments for the pageants, in the by-laws of the guilds that their plays should be " in honour of God the Father Almighty, and the most glorious Virgin Mary, and to the honor of the glorious confessor St. John of Beverley, and All Saints ", and in the enactments of the towns that " every yerr forever " their plays should be produced. Then when one adds to the religious motive the other one, that the festival was the great holiday for the representation of the " pageants of delight ", one may understand what a hold the plays had on the people. This was the season for the religious and the fun-maker, for the priest and the people, and for the nobleman and the artisan. Its annual return was hailed with delight and unbounded pleasure by persons of every rank and station, and the personal interest of every patriotic citizen in the success of the pageants was felt in every preparation and every leet. And it was only after a long and protracted struggle that the people of England were finally willing to relinquish the holiday which for three centuries had been the greatest religious and public celebration of the year.

Cause of their Death. The real cause of the death of the Corpus Christi plays, however, is not far to seek. It was not the expense or the changes in the formation of the trades guilds—these mat-

ters had been successfully battled with in the early days of the pageants,—but a gradual revulsion of feeling on the part of the people, due to the work of religious reformers and the changing spirit of the age. The dean of York, Dr. Matthew Hutton, expressed this in his letter to the mayor and city council of York in 1568 on their asking him for his advice as to the suitableness of the plays for representation. Dr. Hutton's reply was as follows:

Sal. in Christo. My most humble dewtie vouched. I have perused the bokes that your lordshipp with your brethren sent me, and as I finde manie thinges that I muche like because of th'antiquities, so see I manie thinges that I can not allowe because they be disagreinge from the senceritie of the gospell, the which thinges, yf they shuld either be altogether cancelled or altered into other matters, the wholle drift of the play shuld be altered, and therefore I dare not put my pen unto it, because I want both skill and leasure to amende it, thoghe in good will I assure you yf I were worthie to geve your lordshipp and your right worshipfull brethren consell, suerlie mine advise shuld be that it shuld not be plaid, ffor thoghe it was plawsible to yeares agoe, and wold now also of the ignorant sort be well liked, yet now in this happie time of the gospell, I knowe the learned will mislike it, and how the state will beare with it, I know not. Thus beinge bold to utter mine opinion unto your lordshippe, I committ you and your brethren to the tuition of God's spirit. From Thorneton the 27 of Marche, 1568.

Your Lordshipps in Christ to comaunde,
Math. Hutton.

To the right honorable my Lorde Mayor of York and the right worshipfull his brethren, geve this.[1]

[1] Davies, *York Records*, pp. 267-8.

This is the same spirit, too, or air of superior knowledge, that was expressed in the banes to the Chester plays at the time of the attempted revival of the plays in 1600.—

> As all that shall see them, shall most welcome be,
> soe all that here them, wee most humble praye
> not to compare this matter or Storie
> with the age or tyme wherin we presentlye staye,
> but in the tyme of Ignorance wherin we did straye;
> Then doe I compare that this land throughout
> non had the like nor the like dose sett out.
> If the same be likeinge to the comons all,
> then our desier is to satisfie—for that is all our game—
> yf noe matter or shewe therof speciall
> doe not please, but misslike the most of the trayne,
> goe backe I saye to the firste tyme againe,
> then shall you finde: the fyne witt, at this day aboundinge,
> at that day and that age had verye small beinge.[2]

[2] Deimling, *Chester Plays*, p. 3.

Change of Feeling Gradual. The abandonment of the plays, however, had not been accomplished without a protracted struggle and with the utmost reluctance, a reluctance which had extended over an entire century. But the change was as certain and as sure as it was gradual, and may perhaps be first noticed in the guilds evading their pageant duties, in their complaining at the expense of the plays, and in their petitions to the city councils to "exonerate and discharge theym of and for the bringinge forthe" of their scenes. In their earlier days the pageants had been an honor and a pleasure to be sought after; later they were a burden and an expense. Then came the variation of the plays and the substitution of new ones, the Corpus Christi cycles giving place to the *Pater Noster* and the *Creed* plays, allegorical productions, which were substituted for the regular pageants. Within the Corpus Christi cycle, too, changes gradually became evident and "certen pagyauntes [were made] excepte, that is to say, the deyng of our lady, the assumption of our lady, and the coronacion of our lady". Then came the temporary suspension of the plays for certain years, because the king had visited the city earlier in the season and pageants had been given on that occasion, or because the plague had broken out in the midst of the people. In their earlier years the plays had gone forward in spite of the plague, and the mayor and aldermen, as for instance at Lincoln, had even fur-

nished the costumes in order that the holiday might not be lacking. But by the middle of the sixteenth century we find the council at York suspending the performances in consideration of the plague then raging and devoting half of their pageant silver to those "visited with the syknesse which is nowe dangerouse in the citie". Only half of the play money was given, however; the rest was so much saved. And finally came the royal opposition, which was first evident in the last years of the reign of Henry VIII, when the religious guilds and fraternities were placed at the disposal of the crown. The plays were continued with some degree of regularity, however, during the reign of his successors, Edward VI and Mary, but on the accession of Elizabeth the opposition of the civic authorities became directly apparent, although they were compelled occasionally to comply with the demands of the people of "the lesser sort". From now on, however, the plays were produced only by a special leet of the city, where heretofore they had been omitted only by a special leet. And while from the accession of Elizabeth on to the close of the century sporadic revivals of interest in the plays are to be noticed in the towns throughout the kingdom, the principles of the Reformation had worked with telling effect and every outburst of interest was little more than a spark of the old-time splendor.

In the Separate Towns. This passing of the pageants had not progressed with equal uniformity

of course in all the towns. At Ipswich, for instance, the plays are reported under date of Jan. 30, 1531, as "laide for ever aside by order", though as late as 1542 "every householder, wth their family" was required to follow the pageants in the procession and "every Warden and Master of the Trade" was assessed 1*d.* for "their Pageants uppon the day of Corp' Chr'i". At Chester, however, the pageants continued until 1574, and at Coventry until 1580. The fate of most of the pageant-wagons is probably told in the story of the grocers' car at Norwich.—

Item, yt is to be noted that for asmuch as for þe space of 8 yeris ther was neyther Semblye nor metynge, in þe meane season þe Pageante remaynynge 6 yeris in þe Gate howse of Mr. John Sotherton, of London, untyll þe ferme came to 20s; and bycause þe Surveiors in Mr. Sotherton's tyme would not dysburs ani moni therfor, þe Pageante was sett oute in þe Strete & so remayned at þe Black fryers brydge in open strete, when bothe yt was so weather beaten, þat þe cheife parte was rotton; wherupon Mr. John Oldrich, then Maior þe yer 1570, together with Mr. Tho. Whall, Alderman, offred yt to þe Company to sell for the some of 20. s. [*sic*], and when no person wold buy yt for þat price and þat yt styll remayned, & nowe one pece therof rent of & now another as was lyke all to come to nothinge, Nicholas Sotherton, then offycer to Mr. Maior, was requested to take yt in peces for the dept dewe to hym for þe seyd howse ferm therof for 6 yeres aforesayde, at 3s 4d. a yer, who accordinglye dyd take downe þe same & howsed yt accordinglye.[3]

Such was the disposition made of the grocers' wagon at Norwich and such was that, no doubt,

[3] Waterhouse, *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays,* pp. xxxii-iii.

of many another one in England, if the history of all could be known.

Coventry. At Coventry complaint was made of the expense of the plays as early as 1539. In that year the mayor of the city in a letter to Cromwell declared the poor commoners were put to such expense with their plays that they fared the worse all the year after. But the festival had such vogue among the citizens that the plays held out until 1580 when they seem to have been "laid down" for all time. In 1584, a new pageant, the *Destruction of Jerusalem,* was given, and the songs to the shearmen and tailors' play, which are dated 1591, rather suggest that an attempt probably was made to revive the regular cycle in that year, but of the plays after 1580 we have no further proof or mention. Certainly all the crafts could not have taken part in the attempted revival in 1591; for some of the pageants had been sold in 1586 and 1587. In 1596, however, the cappers were disposing of their "byshopps hodds" and the "furrs of players gowns", and the weavers had "players aparell" to rent as late as 1607. The last heard of the pageants is in a note from the city annals in 1628 that, "On the 1st daye of August 1628 being Lamas daye, certaine of or poore Com'oners rose, and pulled downe the hedges of a peece of the Comon ground at whitley at the hether end next to Barnes [Barons] close wch in former tyme was inclosed and taken out of the Comons their, to defraye some

charges for the Pageants playing here in this Cytty, and Midsummer watch, wch said Pageants and watch have bine put downe many yeares since, and yett the said peece of Com'on ground has remayned severall and inclosed untill now".[4]

Minor Cycles. At Bungay a similar destruction of the pageant-cars had been made more than a century before, when somebody the night after Corpus Christi in 1514 "brake and threw down five pageants of the said inhabitants, that is to saye, hevyn pagent, the pagent of all the world, Paradyse pagent, Bethlehem pagent, and helle pagent, the whyche wer ever wont tofore to be caryed abowt the seyd town upon the seyd daye in the honor of the blissyd Sacrement". The plays continued, however, until sometime in the last quarter of the century, the last note we have of them being in 1591. At Beverley it is known that the "comon place" were in existence as late as 1555, but no trace has been found of them at a later date. At Hereford the pageants disappeared sooner. "At a law-day holden at the cytey of Hereford before John Warnecombe, esquyer, mayor, the tenth day of December, the second yere of our sovereign lord Edward the Syxt", 1548, it was agreed that the "corporacions of artificers, craftes, and occupacions in the cytey, who were bound by the grauntes of their corporacions yerely to bring forthe and set forward dyvers pageaunttes of ancient history in the proces-

[4] Sharp, *Coventry Mysteries*, p. 12.

sions of the cytey upon the day and feast of Corpus Xpi, which now is and are omitted and surceased" should pay an annual sum toward the expenses of "the ruynous and decayed causeys, pavements, streets, and walls, cleansing the town ditch or such like reparations".[5]

Chester. At Chester the plays lasted until 1574, but the last thirty years of their career was a checkered one. In 1546, 1551, 1554, 1561, 1567, 1568, 1569, 1571 and 1574 the pageants had been produced, but the performances of 1571 and 1574 had aroused all the virile enmity of an awakened church. In 1571, the Rogers's tell us in their *Breauarye,* "the Maior [John Hankey] would needs have the Playes (commonly called *Chester Playes*) to go forward, against the wills of the Bishops of *Canterbury, York,* and *Chester*". A special inhibition even "was sent from the Archbishop to stay them, but it came too late". And again in 1574 Sir John Savage "caused *the Popish Plays of Chester,* to be played the Sunday, Munday, Tuesday and Wednesday after *Mid-sommer-day,* in contempt of an Inhibition and the Primats Letters from *York,* and from the Earl of *Huntington*". Some of the plays were omitted, however, those "which were thought might not be justified, for the superstition that was in them". The *Breauary* tells us, too, that 1574 was the last year of the pageants in Chester.

[5] Johnson, *Ancient Customs of Hereford,* pp. 119-20.

York. As at Chester, so at York, the same losing battle was fought for the plays. In the early fifties the plays had been suspended on account of the plague, and again in 1564, 1565, and 1566 they were dropped for similar reasons. When they came to be resumed in 1568 serious doubts were entertained as to the suitability of the old plays for public representation; and it was on this occasion that Dr. Hutton wrote the letter quoted above about the changed spirit of the times. Because of this letter the city council voted "to have no play this yere, and the booke of the Creyde play to be delyveryd in agayn"; and, though the "dyverse comoners of the citie were muche desyreous to have Corpuscrysty play this yere", the festival seems to have gone by without any pageants. In 1569 the pageants were produced on Whit-Tuesday, and in 1572 the *Pater Noster* play was given "on the Thursday next after Trynitie Sonday"; but the regular Corpus Christi pageants do not seem to have been seriously agitated again until 1575, when a committee was sent from the city council to the archbishop to see about correcting the plays and having them ready "before Lammas next". Nothing further was heard from the committee, however, and we may suppose that their application to the archbishop was not successful. Thus the matter lay dormant until 1579, when it was agreed by the council that the plays should be given again, but "first the booke shalbe caried to my Lord Arche-

bisshop [Sandys] and Mr. Deane [Hutton] to correcte, if that my Lord Archebisshop doo well like theron". Apparently he did not "well like theron", however; for the plays were not given that summer and the subject was again dropped until the following year, 1580, when the citizens made a final effort to revive the pageants and "did earnestly request of my Lord Mayor and others the worshipful assemblee that Corpus Xpi play might be played this yere". A new mayor was now in office, however, and he coldly replied that "he and his brethren would consider of their request".[6] This is the last mention of the plays at York, although the bakers were still choosing pageant-masters as late as 1656.

Substituted Plays. At Lincoln the same interest in and reaction against the plays is to be found in the course of the centuries. Here, however, the interest of the citizens seem never to have been so much centered in plays of the strictly biblical type; for from before the close of the fourteenth century their pageants were varying between the Pater Noster, St. Laurence, St. Susanna, King Robert of Cecily, Santa Clara, and Corpus Christi plays. And even as early as 1564 their "Popish Plays" had already been replaced by a semi-religious "standing play of some story of the Bible". The subject chosen was "the story of Toby", and the citizens seem to have attempted to supplant the zeal and

[6] Davies *York Records*, pp. 268-72.

earnestness of the Corpus Christi plays with the show and ornamentation of the new subject. Other towns, too, were constrained to gratify the wishes of their citizens with substituted pageants. At Coventry, where the regular plays were shelved, as we have seen, in 1580, the *Destruction of Jerusalem,* a semi-religious, semi-historical play had to be substituted four years later; and again in the nineties the *History of King Edward the Confessor* and the *Conquest of the Danes* were offered as alternatives for the *Destruction of Jerusalem.*

Conclusion. Thus we have seen that long before the beginning of the seventeenth century all the regular Corpus Christi plays had come to an end and their places had either been taken by semi-religious, semi-historical scenes, or else had been left vacant. It is fair to say, however, that none of the substituted plays seem to have given the same keen delight or to have been undertaken with the old time religious zeal that had attended the representation of the regular Corpus Christi plays. This was natural, too. In the earlier plays the production of the pageants had been attended with a sense of religious duty as well as of pleasure, and the actors and the citizens had felt that they were doing themselves and their visitors a spiritual service in thus portraying the scenes of the Bible. The plays were a duty as well as a pleasure. But in the new semi-historical plays the spiritual element was absent and the whole motive was on a

lower plane. Thus the richness and the splendor of the pageants was kept up after the biblical scenes were gone, but there was never again the spiritual and religious fervor of the earlier days. The Corpus Christi plays had fulfilled their mission; they were creatures of a single age killed by the sophistication of a new era.

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